8
FEBRUARY 1988

NEW TIMES

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

ITALY. A CURE FOR DRUG-ADDICTS?

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NEW TIMES

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The setting of the deadline for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has paved the way for the successful completion of Afghan-Pakistani talks in Geneva. For reactions to the new Soviet initiative, see our correspondents' reports from four capitals (pp.5-9)

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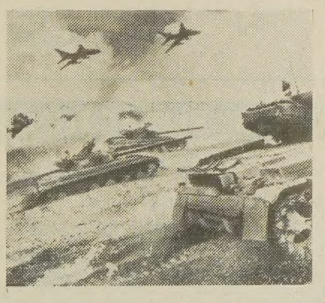

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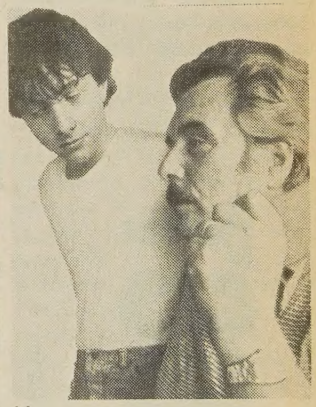

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Cinema
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER AS A SOVIET MILITIAMAN

Front cover: the Red Army and Navy on guard of Motherland.
A poster by Vladimir Lebedev.

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HOPE

Waiting for my boy friened

My friend Victor has been in the army for almost a year, carrying out his internationalist duty in Afghanistan. We have been corresponding all this time. When Victor's letters are delayed, I begin to worry about him.

Not long ago I was at a meeting of young men who had returned from Afghanistan. I listened to their stories about the difficult and dangerous service there - armed clashes with rebels, the suffering of peaceful civilians, and friends who fell in action.

Victor also writes to me about his life there, the thanks peasants give Soviet soldiers for the liberation of their villages, and about a ruined hospital restored by him and his mates, the mutual assistance and friendship of our soldiers.

But he has never written about the terrible details the boys spoke of at the meeting I attended. Perhaps he did not want to worry me. I only learned that he had been wounded after he was discharged from hospital.

Victor and I, and all boys who have served in Afghanistan, want peace restored there as early as possible. A few days ago I heard Mikhail Gorbachev's Afghanistan statement on television. I think that everyone, not only those whose close relatives are now serving there, warmly supports the Soviet decision.

I believe that nothing will prevent our boys returning home, and am happy for their mothers, wives and girl friends. I'm waiting for Victor.

MARINA ZUYEVA
Ryazan Region, U.S.S.R.

TWO LETTERS FROM BRITAIN

My children have a future

Now, after the conclusion of the INF treaty, I know that I may live out my God-given allotted years without the threat of the elimination of the earth by nuclear war.

Hopefully, I may now be able to visit your beautiful Russia and the United States of America at some time during my life.

I know the world is not totally nuclear-weapon free, but it is a very promising start, and I think now that my children have a future.

LINDA SPEED
Chester, Britain

No more fears

I am an average 16-year-old girl studying at school. I have nothing special going for me, only that I am proud of the world I live in. I find politics boring and never pay attention to what's on the news.

But in December 1987 I saw the news programme showing President Reagan and the Soviet leader signing the treaty to dismantle some nuclear warheads and bring peace to this world.

I was deeply moved. You see, I have often wondered why we should try and get along in the world when we have no idea who is going to press the button and finish us all off. So naturally I lived in anxiety. But now my mind has been set at rest because I have understood there is a future for us of the younger generation.

JACKIE COTTON
Fetcham, Britain

THE WAY I SEE IT

I wish you courage, Coco

I was deeply moved by the letter (issue No. 44, 1987) from Coco Weinraub, a 16-year-old high-school student in Los Angeles. This courageous girl started a fast against the threat of nuclear war. She wrote of her desire to do everything she could to improve Soviet-American relations.

I would very much like to support Coco, talk with her, and tell her about life in the Soviet Union. For two years I have corresponded with people in various countries. Among them is an active campaigner for peace in Canada, who is a member of the Communist Party. I write to him about perestroika, and the interests and aspirations of the Soviet people.

Over the two years of our correspondence I have understood, to my regret, that people in the West know very little about our country and the changes taking place in it.

IGOR SHUMILOV
Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

GLASNOST FROM OUR MAILBAG

OUR READERS' REFLECTIONS

...on the nuclear weapons of France and Britain

Isn't it outrageous that while the Soviet Union and the United States are reducing their nuclear missile arsenals, France and Britain are retaining and modernizing their nuclear weapons?

MILDA YANSONE
Latvia, U.S.S.R.

...on the Palestinian people's struggle

I fully support the movement of the Palestinian people for their rights. Even the United States was compelled to vote in the United Nations for the resolution condemning Tel Aviv's policy of genocide against the Palestinians.

I am sure that no Israeli repressions will be able to put down the Arabs' just struggle for national sovereignty and the return of their lawful territories. But isn't it possible to solve this problem not by force but by convening an international conference with the participation of neighbouring countries, as well as the Soviet Union and the United States?

COSIMO DE CANDIA
Mola di Bari, Italy

...on public commissions

In a recent issue of New Times, I read an article about public security commissions set up in Japan to supervise the work of the police. I would like to know whether similar commissions exist in our country. For it is no secret that our militiamen also do wrong in the execution of their official duties.

VLADIMIR CHIZHIK
Ivano-Frankovsk, U.S.S.R.

...on the socialist economy

I am very interested in your country and would like to know as much as possible about it. New Times is a great help in this respect. However, it seldom carries articles on agriculture, industrial production, and the basic principles of the socialist economy. Could you publish detailed articles on these subjects more frequently than you do now?

NURA-EL-ISMAIL
Nigeria

LOOKING BACK

Our wartime friendship lives on

During the last war I fought against the German invaders jointly with Soviet troops. I was in the Pinsk area, Byelorussia, deep in the enemy rear, where a reconnaissance group commanded by Major Vasily Tsvetkov operated, carrying out a special assignment.

I was included in the group and appointed deputy head of a special team whose task it was to establish contacts with local Polish patriots. In the area where we were active there were several villages inhabited by Poles. Many Poles also lived in Pinsk. It was largely on their aid and support that Major Tsvetkov relied.

Later, I was also made responsible for the information-collecting point situated in the small town of Karolinek. Along with Soviet soldiers, it was guarded by a Polish group under the command of junior officer Leon Onichimowski.

Messengers from Pinsk and other places came to our point. They brought intelligence about the movements of German troops and trains carrying ammunition and troops to the front. Messengers received instructions there, as well as explosives and anti-fascist leaflets.

The intelligence was then dispatched to Colonel G. Linkov at the main base and sent by radio to Moscow. I heard that many of our intelligence reports proved very valuable. For instance, we detected the transfer of two German divisions from the Western Front, from France, to the Eastern Front. It was concluded from our report that a large-scale redeployment of German troops was under way.

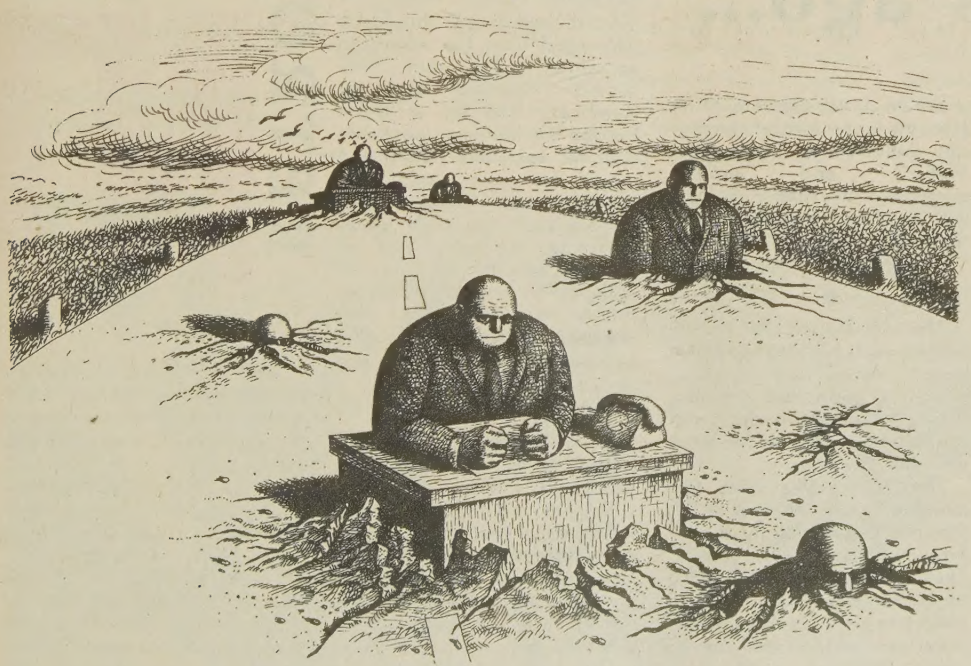
We also captured information prisoners and, together with Soviet brothers-in-arms, took sabotage actions against nazis. For their operations with Soviet partisan groups, many Polish scouts were decorated. I was presented with the Order of the Patriotic War Second Class.

It is, of course, impossible to forget our joint struggle against the nazi invaders, as it is also impossible to forget our Soviet brothers-in-arms, wonderful and courageous people. One could always rely on them.

I still correspond with my former commander, Major Tsvetkov, who now lives in Odessa, and with Ivan Shubitidze, commander of a partisan brigade which operated near Pinsk. Meeting from time to time at the sites of former battles, we seem to relive the past and believe that it must never be repeated.

MIECZYSLAW JUCHNIEWICZ
colonel (ret.)
Warsaw, Poland

Watch out: bureaucrats mashrooming!
Drawing by Garif Basyrov



SUGGESTION

They merit commemoration, too

I ask you to publish my suggestion in the magazine. The names of those who died from their wounds or shell shock soon after the Victory should also be included in the lists of the soldiers who were killed in action during the war. Their number is great. I think we should honour the memory of these people in the same way as we do those who fell on the battlefield.

IVAN GRUZD
Ashkhabad, U.S.S.R.

PERSONAL VIEW

The only chance of saving the world

The various forms taken by the struggle for peace make it possible to save mankind and progress. Preparations for war impede progress, and war, especially nuclear war, can annihilate all life on earth. I think that those people who content themselves with not being involved in preparations for war are greatly mistaken. It is not enough.

Everyone, wherever they live and whatever their occupations, should make their contribution to the strugle for peace. They should not content themselves with passive reflection. The sharing of the pain of other people, the desire to help others to the extent of one's ability and, even more so, to help the whole of mankind, is the only chance of saving our world.

MIKHAIL KORSAKOV
Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

PRIVATE OPINION

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

Sir Jeoffrey Howe, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Britain)

At the U.K.-Soviet talks, we did some very intensive and useful work. We dealt with a great many questions. We spent time discussing important regional issues, more particularly the Middle East. We also discussed arms control. I hope that we shall be able to derive an advantage from the great improvement in our relations that has been taking place over the last few years. That does not mean that we will be able to solve every problem. It just means that we can discuss every problem to move towards resolving some of them and to understand each other where we disagree. That, I think, will be fruitful for the peoples of our two countries and for U.K.-Soviet relations.

Natalia Ginzburg, authoress (Italy)

Newspapers are again reporting Israeli army reprisals against the Arab population of the occupied territories. Israel is becoming an increasingly aggressive racist state, which for me is the most painful fact of recent years. As I am half Jewish, I feel that I am to blame for Israel's reprisals against the Palestinians. I think many Jews in various parts of the world feel the same. I mention this because people must discriminate between Jews and the Israeli military. Italy was once a fascist state, but I don't think anyone abroad believed the entire nation to be fascist, and that is how I think we must regard Israel today. When we learn that Palestinian youths are having their arms broken, it is important for us to realize that it is not Jews but the Israeli military who are responsible. A large portion of Israel's population abhor and reject these crimes. It is the authority there, and not the people, who are repressive. It would be a mistake to confuse the two. I have never been a Zionist, and never felt that I wanted to live in Israel even in times of nazi persecution. Hence I see things from Italy, and that tells me that some Israelis who suffered from nazism have themselves been infected with the disease of racism, violence and harassment of others. It is axiomatic that evil generates evil. I am doing what I can. Only recently, Italian women MPs appealed in the press for donations for Palestinian children who are in urgent need of medicine and food. I was one of the signatories. I also write books which, I hope, teach people humanitarianism, regardless of nationality.

40 years ago...

In Tokyo they say that the principal Japanese war criminals will have died natural deaths long before the International Military Tribunal examining their cases pronounces its verdict. One cannot deny that there is a grain of truth in this. The Tokyo trial has been dragging on for almost two years, during which time Matsuoka and Nagano, two of the 28 war criminals, have already died, while another two are seriously ill and are also nearing death. The defendants are bending over backwards to put off the hour of retribution. In this they are willingly assisted by their Japanese advocates, most of whom have long been actively helping Tojo and his clique.

(New Times No. 5, 1948)

✦

The Polish Republic and the Soviet Union have signed a billion-dollar agreement in Moscow for reciprocal commodity deliveries for the period 1948-52, and another agreement to supply Poland with industrial equipment under a 450-million-dollar credit.

(New Times No. 6, 1948)

✦

The U.S. Defence and State Departments have already prepared camps for German prisoners, appointed commandants, recruited warders and agreed on guidelines for work with the Germans.

These principles were formulated by Col. Winlock of the Defence Department at a conference of camp staff on July 27, 1943, at which he said that the object was to train German cadres to be used to reinforce American prestige and implement American policies in Germany following Allied occupation. He added that they should select good Germans regardless of whether they were nazis or not, and that generally such terms as "fascist" and "nazi" should be expunged from the American vocabulary. He said they should remember that for Americans and for a future Europe the hitherto unpopular national socialists could and would be more useful and suitable than various anti-fascists and democrats generally. In Germany and in Europe generally, he said, the Americans would establish order, to which end they needed numerous cadres akin to themselves in spirit and conviction.

(New Times No. 7, 1948)

✦

The Soviet Army is thirty years old. For a man this is a time of maturity, for history a fleeting instant, and for the new system an earnest of its longevity. The world sees the star of our army, which does not threaten as it is not the Mars of old. As it did thirty years ago, this star radiates peace to the world.

(New Times No. 8, 1948)

RETRO NT

✦

The resurgence of German imperialism after the first world war is the result in particular of the policies of American Big Business.

All German monopolies without exception had closely binding cartel agreements with leading U.S. corporations.

The American partners of the German monopolies were, of course, fully aware of the political ties between Hitler's dictatorship and German Big Business.

(New Times No. 9, 1948)

A CHANCE FOR PEACE

A political settlement in Afghanistan would be an important breakthrough in the chain of regional conflicts

FROM STRIFE TO COOPERATION

The Afghan people are tired of endless war and bloodshed. Therefore the simultaneous statements by Michail Gorbachev in Moscow and President Najibullah in Kabul on resolute steps towards a political settlement of the protracted conflict are of concern to every Afghan.

MIKHAIL KOZHUKHOV reports from Kabul:

The prospects of reaching an agreement on the future of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet troops are being discussed here both in ministerial offices and city bazaars: the problem concerns everyone.

"Naturally, the new peace initiatives of our two countries is the theme dominating all the Afghan papers, our own Hewad (Motherland) included," Hamid Rogh, editor-in-chief of this government publication, told me in his office as I leafed through an issue just off the presses.

The decision of Moscow and Kabul to start withdrawing Soviet troops, provided there is an end to any outside interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, offers the best way of establishing peace in Afghanistan, Hasan Sharq, Chairman of the State Committee for Refugees, writes in Hewad. Under the circumstances, all parties concerned should forgo their personal or group interests for the sake of those of the Afghan people as a whole.

"A cardinal schedule for the Soviet troop withdrawal offers hope of success at the Geneva negotiations. Every Afghan rejoices at this prospect," writes Neamatullah Pazhvak, a member of the all-Afghan Commission on National Reconciliation.

"The setting of a firm deadline for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is a practical manifestation of new political thinking," the editor-in-chief of Hewad said, "because it not only meets the interests of my own people, who are suffering from the war, but also paves the way for the settlement of other regional conflicts. After all, small wars are often preludes to big ones."

Hamid Rogh singled out several cardinal elements of the coordinated Moscow-Kabul position. Soviet troops will withdraw from Afghanistan only provided non-interference in our affairs is guaranteed. This should be clear to all. And, moreover, their pullout is in no way linked with the formation of a coalition government in Kabul - this is an internal problem that concerns Afghanistan.

Kabul was not a little perplexed to encounter a new and rather serious obstacle in the way of the agreement in Geneva which the two sides had brought so near by joint effort. The President of Pakistan said he would not sign an agreement with the Afghan government unless "fighters for the faith" were represented in it. "What's the connection between the political settlement and Soviet troops?" even those far from sympathetic to the April revolution wondered. "It is up to us Afghans to decide what the new government is to be like. We need no outside advice or help in this matter."

Six Soviet regiments were withdrawn from Afghanistan in spring 1987.

Tass photo

EXPERT'S VIEW

BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

Many readers have been asking us about the various aspects of the Afghan conflict and how it can be resolved. Below New Times reporter Alexander Usvatov interviews Professor YURI GANKOVSKY, a leading Soviet Orientalist who has visited Afghanistan and Pakistan many times.

Should the forthcoming round of Geneva talks on the Afghan problem prove abortive, how do you think developments will go and what steps could the Soviet Union take?

It goes without saying that success or failure of the Geneva talks does not depend on the Soviet Union alone. In the same way, the success or failure of the policy of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and the creation of a coalition government does not depend solely on the Afghan leadership. No doubt it is now already obvious even to the most incorrigible sceptic that the U.S.S.R. desires a political settlement and the earliest withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. But if, because of Pakistan, which is being subjected to considerable external pressure, the texts of the documents on a settlement, which are now almost completely ready, are not signed at Geneva, the Soviet Union will, I think, have to act in a way appropriate to the new situation, while continuing, of course, to seek a political solution to the Afghan problem.

How would you explain the fact that Pakistan is obstructing a settlement? Shouldn't it, on the contrary, be interested in shedding the burden of the Afghan problem as soon as possible?

Generally speaking, it is of course interested in that or, to put it more accurately, should be interested. The influx of Afghan refugees has disrupted normal life in the country to no small degree, especially in the economic sphere. Meanwhile in Pakistan itself we see increasing pressure being exerted by forces that realize that it is in their country's interests to build relations with Afghanistan, and not with Afghanistan alone, on a long-term, good-neighbourly basis. Yet there are very influential forces there who believe that it is not to their advantage to put out the conflagration raging in Afghanistan, inasmuch as the situation currently obtaining, with Pakistan serving as a springboard for the undeclared war against Afghanistan, enables them to obtain considerable material and other dividends.

Let us now go back to the origins of the events in Afghanistan. What were the root causes of the April 1978 revolution, which brought the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan to power?

Afghanistan was one of the world's poorest and least developed countries, while President Mohammad Daud's authoritarian regime represented the interests of a handful of rich aristocratic landowners, for the most part Pashtuns, and the elite of a comparatively powerful bourgeois, chiefly merchant, class. Democratic forces were suppressed and the lot of the overwhelming majority of the population was one of poverty and despair. Even Western observers foresaw the inevitability of a revolutionary explosion in the country. Louis Dupree, a leading American Orientalist, clearly warned of this in December 1977, in the afterword to the second edition of his book "Afghanistan" published in Princeton, in the U.S., in early 1978.

What caused the drastic aggravation of the situation in and around Afghanistan only a few months after April 1978?

There were many reasons for this. Revolutions always encounter resistance from the forces that have been ousted. In Afghanistan the situation was further exacerbated by a range of other objective and subjective factgors. The summer of 1978 had already revealed disunity and a power struggle within the leadership of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Unjustified repressions followed.

The hastiness shown by the new authority in implementing crucial socio-economic reforms, and skipping phases that should have been passed gradually, especially in such a backward country, likewise had an adverse effect. The extremely significant role of Islam in the people's moral and political orientation was underestimated. The substance and inevitability of key reforms was not made sufficiently clear to the majority of the people; at times they were implemented by force, which distorted the progressive content of the projected reforms. This applied above all to the land reform carried out between the autumn of 1978 and the summer of 1979.

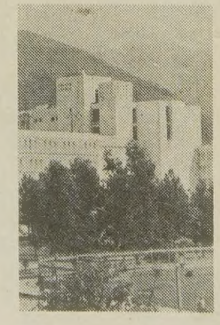
No compensation was made for

What will happen after the Soviet troops have left? Won't the Afghan revolution be drowned in blood, every Afghan is asking himself today. I asked the editor-in-chief of Hewad what he thought.

"The mountains of Afghanistan are virtually larded with arms depots," he replied. "Local conflicts may flare up int ermittently over the next few years. Some may try to settle accounts, to 'wash out blood with blood'... Nevertheless, I think we are strong enough to defend the revolution. As for the oppposition, we have suggested that all those who hold dear the future of our nation should join coalition government bodies at all levels, from bottom to top. So instead of fighting we are going to run the country together."

■

New obstacles



Pakistan is the principal springboard for the undeclared war against Afghanistan. It is there that most counterrevolutionary groups have their headquarters and training camps. EVGENY ALEKSANDROV and YURI DENISOV report from Islamabad on Pakistan's approach to the Afghan settlement:

Afghanistan is a common talking point here: whenever acquaintances meet, the chances are that, following the traditional exchange of greetings, they will settle into a discussion of the prospects for a settlement in Afghanistan. One has the

expropriated land, even to those serving in the army, as a result of which many succumbed to anti-government propaganda. The drawing up and collection of the title deeds was costly for the peasants, as they had to pay not only for land received under the reform, but also for the land they already owned. In many parts of the country peasants who refused to take land on these terms were threatened with reprisals. As a result, many Afghan peasants did not accept the reforms, and this greatly reduced the social base for the revolution. The population began to emigrate wholesale across the border to Pakistan and Iran. The forces of domestic counterrevolution and international reaction skilfully played this up in the undeclared war launched against revolutionary Afghanistan.

When did outright foreign interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, in the form of an undeclared war, begin?

The first camps for training armed contingents to be sent into Afghanistan were established by counterrevolutionary émigrés in northwestern Pakistan only a few weeks after the April revolution. They ably exploited the patriarchal traditions of Afghan society and the deeply religious faith of the population, by virtue of which tribal chieftains, large landowners, and the Moslem clergy still exert considerable influence on both refugees in Pakistan and peasants, shopkeepers and artisans in Afghanistan itself.

In their fight against the new Afghanistan, the leaders of the Afghan counterrevolution relied from the outset on extensive support and help from right-wing circles in Pakistan, Iran and certain other Moslem states of the region. They also at once began to receive considerable aid from the U.S. and other Western countries. By the close of 1979, saboteur-terrorist gangs they had organized were operating in 18 of the 26 existing provinces. Even Western scholars, for instance Professor Hafees Malik of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies in Pennsylvania, observed that the situation threatened Afghanistan's very existence as a unified state.

Why do you think extremist Afghan émigré leaders continue to reject the policy of national reconciliation, and resist the institution of a coalition government?

Perhaps not everyone knows that many of them, such as Sibghatullah Mojaddidi, Gulduddin Hikmatyar, and Burhanuddin Rabbani, emigrated long before the April revolution. For instance, Sibghatullah Mojaddidi left in 1971 when Afghanistan was still a monarchy, while the other two left shortly after Mohammad Daud took over in the summer of 1973. They settled in Pakistan, and before that vigorously struggled against the king and against Daud, whom they considered too "leftist." They opposed any modernization in Afghanistan thinking that it undermined Islamism, and repeatedly engineered armed action in various parts of the country.

It was entirely predictable that these men and others of their ilk would not accept the April revolution either. Today, some advocate the restoration of the prerevolutionary social and political order, while others adhere to Islamic fundamentalism. It is these men and their armed groupings fighting against democratic Afghanistan in particular who are supplied with guns and money by Western countries and the region's conservative regimes. Relying on this aid, they continue to reject all of Kabul's proposals for a coalition government, and in fact aspire to absolute power in Afghanistan. This unrealistic approach merely serves to prolong the bloodshed. ■

These KamAZ and Tatra trucks have been supplied by the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia as part of the socialist countries' help to Afghanistan in advancing its national economy.

TASS photo

impression that everyone here is an expert on the problem. The new Soviet initiatives have given an impulse to hopes for a settlement of the protracted conflict. The Soviet Union, it is generally believed here, has met practically all the requirements from the Pakistani side which were a stumbling block at the Geneva agreements.

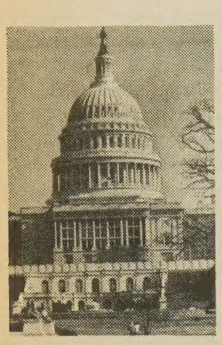
It would seem that under the present circumstances nothing can now prevent the talks from reaching a successful outcome. However, the leadership of Pakistan has responded to the Soviet gesture of good will by putting forward new requirements - this time having nothing to do with the problems under discussion in Geneva. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Zain Noorani, for instance, announced at a press conference on the occasion of the Gorbachev statement that Pakistan would sign the Geneva accords only with the so-called "lawful" government of Afghanistan. The implication is that such a government would have to be formed before the signing of the accords. Islamabad is thus trying to link artificially a strictly internal problem which concerns exclusively the Afghans with external aspects of a settlement.

This abrupt change in Islamabad's policy incurred criticism from the political opposition. Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, Secretary-General of the Tehrik-i-Istqlal Party, described the step as a "violation of the Geneva process and a complete about face."

During talks with the leadership of Pakistan, Yuli Vorontsov, U.S.S.R. First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, pointed to Islamabad's inconsistency and the fact that its present stance can only serve to impede and delay the settlement in Afghanistan indefinitely.

The new Soviet initiatives have made no impression on the leaders of the Pakistan-based alliance of seven Afghan mujahedeen groups antagonistic to the present government of Afghanistan. At their conference in Islamabad the other day, the leaders of the alliance dismissed the possibility of resolving the Afghan problem through the Geneva talks, and declared that they would carry on fighting and would never sit next to representatives of the PDPA in any cabinet. At the same time, they revealed plans to form a "provisional government" as a counterbalance to the Afghan government now in power. ■

An important move



The United States has been actively supporting and arming Afghan counterrevolutionaries for years, and using them as cat's paws in their undeclared war against the Republic of Afghanistan. Journalist IGOR IGNATYEV reports from the U.S. capital on Washington's reaction to the new Soviet bid for a settlement in Afghanistan:

The Soviet leader's proposals aimed at expediting a settlement in Afghanistan became last week's No. 1 foreign news story in Washington.

"This is a very important statement," Robert Newman, onetime U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan and now an associate of the Washington Centre for Strategic and International Studies, told me. "The fact that the statement has been made by the Soviet top executive lends it special weight - and, besides, it contains a number of very interesting points."

Raymond Garthoff, a well-known expert on Soviet affairs at the Brookings Institution, noted the very constructive stand taken by Moscow, and hoped that the participants in the Geneva talks would reach an early agreement, making it possible to get down to a practical settlement in Afghanistan.

The right have raised hue and cry against "leaving the Afghan freedom fighters in the lurch." The experts at the Heritage Foundation are the noisiest of all.

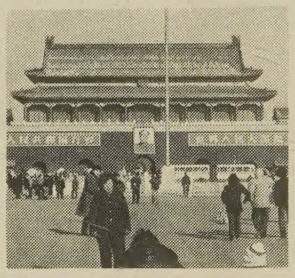
What was the administration's response?

Marlin Fitzwater, assistant to the President for press relations, described the Soviet statement as a "very good step in the right direction." "We welcome the Gorbachev statement as a positive signal of serious Soviet intent to withdraw from Afghanistan," Charles Redman, a State Department spokesman, echoed. It is believed here that Afghanistan will now "move higher" up the agenda of the Shultz-Shevardnadze talks due in Moscow late this February.

On the whole, the administration is temporizing. The feasibility of a political settlement in Afghanistan largely depends on such external factors as Washington's stand on the issue of stopping American aid to armed counterrevolutionary groupings. At the UPI agency's estimate, they received no less than 715 million dollars last year. Deciding on when and under what circumstances to discontinue its support for Afghan resistance is a hard political problem for Washington, the newspaper Washington Post admits.

Marlin Fitzwater said on February 11 that the United States had agreed in principle. Asked by newsmen whether President Reagan had accepted the preliminary agreements already reached by Kabul and Islamabad, he replied that such things were not subject to approval by the President, and that the progress of the negotiations was being followed by the State Department. No concrete answer was given to the question of when the U.S. would stop arms supplies to the counterrevolutionaries, although this is an important condition for ending the armed conflict and reaching a political settlement in Afghanistan. ■

Temporizing



Reactions in China to the statement by the Soviet leader on Afghanistan. GRIGORY ARSLANOV reports from Peking:

National and provincial Chinese papers front-paged the basic provisions of Mikhail Gorbachev's statement - some at length, others briefly. A summary of the statement was broadcast by the national Chinese television and radio. Media reports emphasize the fact that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is not linked with the formation of a new coalition government which is a strictly internal affair.

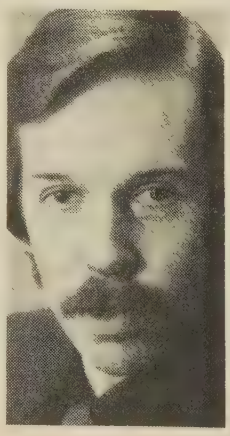
Asked by newsmen how the P.R.C. Foreign Ministry had commented on the new Soviet initiative, the ministry's spokesman stressed that an early withdrawal of Soviet troops would provide the key to the Afghan problem. He expressed the hope that the Soviet side would take action for the prompt restoration of the status of Afghanistan as an independent, neutral and non-aligned country.

The local press continues to cover the steps being taken to implement the plan of withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan put forward in the statement, and reports on the positive reaction to the Soviet initiative across the world. At the same time, the Chinese papers have published all the comments by Afghan counterrevolutionaries in Pakistan. They have also quoted Mohammed Zahir Shah - the former king of Afghanistan now living in Italy - as saying that he is ready to take part in solving the Afghan problem by political means.

The newspaper Renmin ribao summed up Peking's assessment of the Soviet initiative as follows: "This is an important move towards a final solution of the Afghan problem." It is worth noting here that all the information on Afghanistan appearing in the Chinese papers today has an undercurrent: until now the Chinese side has regarded the situation in Afghanistan as an obstacle in the way of normalizing relations between the P.R.C. and the U.S.S.R. ■

Let the Afghans decide

LEV YELIN



In his statement on Afghanistan, Mikhail Gorbachev put it in no uncertain terms that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country and the guarantees of non-interference in its internal affairs are one thing, while the formation of a coalition government there is something else again. If the Afghan-Pakistani negotiations in Geneva are a success, the troops will be pulled out irrespective of whether a new Afghan government is formed and ready to function by the withdrawal date. When the government is formed will depend on the results of the national reconciliation policy. The new cabinet is to be formed only by the Afghans themselves, including those now on the other side of the barricade. Any negotiations on this subject between other states, any outside recommendations or suggestions would be simply against international law (incidentally, it looks tempting to some to decide for the Afghans the relative proportion of cabinet posts to be held by "our men" and "their men").

Mikhail Gorbachev's Statement has refuted the allegations that the Soviet Union merely promises to pull its troops out while actually trying, behind propaganda smokescreen, to restructure the Afghan state system to its liking, to weaken the counterrevolutionaries militarily, to form an obedient government. The U.S.S.R. is honestly working to discontinue its military presence in Afghanistan.

Some may say that Moscow would certainly like the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, friendly to it, to stay in power. Even granted this is true, the choice is the Afghans', and the U.S.S.R. is not going to intervene. The resolution of the recent all-Afghan Loya Jirgah saying "Afghanistan will not agree to its territory, or part of it, being made a springboard for aggression against the neighbouring countries" suits Soviet political and military leaders.

And so, what will the future government of Afghanistan be like - or rather what may it turn out to be? Where are its members to be looked for: in Kabul? Peshawar? Rome maybe? I am not going to engage in guesswork here. After all, predicting the composition of a future cabinet is often quite difficult till the last moment in a Western country, let alone Afghanistan torn asunder not only by a thousand of historical, national and tribal differences, but also by a bloody war in progress for almost a decade now. By the way, has there ever been in the history of that country a government expressing the interests of all factions, all groupings, all tribes?

The only conclusion is that at the complicated present stage of the National dialogue it is hard for a commentator to dot all the i's as regards the future government. One can only try to imagine what kind of government it is going to be in principle, and all those concerned have a lot of common ground in this respect. To believe certain Pakistan-based leaders of the opposition they also want Afghanistan to be a sovereign, neutral, non-aligned state. Consequently, its future government is supposed to guarantee this status. In the present situation, complicated as it is, the PDPA's approach to the formation of such a cabinet appears quite logical. I would describe it as a "minimum programme."

It isn't right to "deal out" Afghan cabinet posts for the Afghans

This programme boils down to enlisting all the patriotic forces - irrespective of whether they side with or oppose the government now in power - in running the country. Any party, be it Islamic, monarchist, or whatever, can offer its candidates for cabinet posts, leaving it to the nation to decide, by a popular vote, who is going to take over at the helm of the state. I would only like to underscore the daring of the Afghan leadership's actions. A ruling party in control of the situation is prepared to waive its monopoly of its own free will.

So the PDPA's position presupposing flexible responses to changes in the situation looks realistic. What are the other sides' positions? Just a few years ago President Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan told a New York Times correspondent that mujahiddins ("fighters for faith") and refugees, as well as representatives of the present government in Kabul, might form a provisional government. This proved not to Washington's liking. So in the next interview the Pakistani President sounded much tougher, saying he would not sign a peace treaty with the present government in Kabul. Islamabad would not decide anything, he said, until a provisional government was formed - preferably without any PDPA representatives in it. What is it if not an attempt to drag out negotiations? And why cannot a government vested with constitutional powers, which has started the negotiations and been conducting them throughout all these years, bring the Geneva process to completion on its own before a coalition cabinet is formed?

The so-called "resistance" is divided on the government and negotiations issues. True, the "alliance" of seven Peshawar-based groups has announced recently its intention to form a government of its own, "free from communists and atheists," in the parts of Afghanistan under their control. Won't this create a situation similar to the one which has provoked the undeclared war? And what makes the counterrevolutionaries so sure that they will succeed in spreading their control to the rest of the country this time? This is simply unrealistic.

The formation of a coalition government is a domestic affair of Afghanistan. Unless this process goes within the framework of national reconciliation, blood will flow again. And the last thing: whatever the differences of views, every effort must be made to keep the Geneva talks going. It is only a negotiated settlement that will produce a multi-party coalition government and provide conditions for its normal and peaceful functioning.

Bob Hope was joking. What about Henry Kissinger?

GENNADY GERASIMOV

What do comedian Bob Hope and Professor Henry Kissinger have in common in their approach to world problems? You'll soon find out.

Americans adore Bob Hope. The new Cultural Centre in Palm Desert, California, a favourite refuge for rich Americans, has been named after him. He goes down well with the President, too. In the course of one conversation, Bob Hope said to the President: "I really appreciate the nice things you said about me. Even if I'm not Russian."

Last December Russians were indeed given a warm welcome in Washington, and that probably prompted Bob Hope's joke.

In an article in the Los Angeles Times on January 17 and, somewhat later, in the Washington Post, Kissinger wrote: "The euphoria of the Gorbachev visit may in retrospect appear as an escapism that dealt with symptoms, not causes."

As for euphoria - when one lives in the clouds and no longer has one's feet firmly on the ground - I didn't notice much of it in Washington. What I did see were tough negotiations on serious issues, and these had their own drama when the farewell ceremony was held up because of differences of opinion, and the balance of interests was settled at the last moment. But the background against which the talks took place was indeed one of unusual public enthusiasm. It is unlikely to have been due in the main to the efforts of journalists, who had gathered in Washington in untold numbers. Rather it reflected the sentiments of the people, who were becoming increasingly aware of the scale of the nuclear threat and welcomed the chance to reduce it somewhat. The dynamism, sincerity and easy manner of the Soviet leader, brought to the homes of millions by TV, also, of course, played its part in strengthening hopes for achieving a non-nuclear world. But, as they say, it takes two to tango....

The first steps went well, as both sides came out in favour of nuclear disarmament, and agreed, as a first step - a first, and not an isolated and independent step - to eliminate their medium- and shorter-range missiles.

The next step is to cut strategic offensive weapons by half.

That, in my opinion, takes care of the euphoria.

Now about the escapism. For the first time in history a move is being made from control over armaments to disarmament itself, from the limitation of nuclear weapons to the elimination of two classes of such weapons. They will be cut back, and that is in no sense a retreat from real problems. It is getting away from discussion and mere talk and getting down to actions.

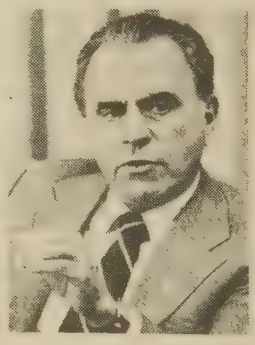
Kissinger, however, believes that this is a case of dealing with the symptoms, not the disease. He does not name the disease, but from the context it is clear that he means the old thesis about a "Soviet threat." He argues, for instance, that "the Soviet Union may be tempted... to tip the global balance of power in its favour" and that the measures under discussion in the field of nuclear disarmament create "conditions for Soviet blackmail."

If it is said that generals prepare for past wars, then probably it could equally be said that certain professors operate within the formulas of their youth. 31 years ago, the young academic in the administration claimed in his book "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy" (it was published in Russian in 1959): "The Soviet leadership has made every effort to retain its militancy."

As far as symptoms and causes go, in the nuclear age their relationship is reminiscent of that between the chick and the egg: which came first?

The media's mission today

USIA Director Charles Wick interviewed by New Times



Charles Wick, director of the United States Information Agency, was among the American VIPs I was particularly interested to meet with during the summit. I wondered how a personal friend of Reagan's since his Hollywood days reacted to what was going on and, moreover, how the atmosphere of the negotiations had impressed the chief of the propaganda service.

I wasn't so sure Charles Wick would be willing to receive a Soviet journalist. Last summer the USIA director attended the opening of an American exhibition in the U.S.S.R., met Soviet mass media executives and, in his own words, was disappointed by the difference in views. I thought I could see the reason for director Wick's resentment: while welcoming glasnost in our country, he wanted to use it in the exclusive interests of his agency. Though patriotic, this intention proved unacceptable to the other side; for his part, the director was not inclined to effect reasonable compromises.

My apprehensions did not materialize, however. We met, and the conversation got off to a good start.

I asked Charles Wick what he thought of the new impulse Soviet-American relations had received in Washington.

We are pinning great hopes on the visit, he said. I would like the campaigns of mutual attack, recrimination and biased information to sink into oblivion. Media workers in both countries must wake up to the need for change.

I don't believe, he went on, that the United States and our government are always right, any more than you are. However, we must make an extra effort to reduce the tensions still existing between us. What can we journalists do about it? I think it would be useful to hold professional meetings at which we could tell each other straight what we don't like about our colleagues' work and why, explain our positions - in short, learn to understand each other's actions and motives. And another thing. I think the Washington summit has contributed much

Countries naturally arm because they do not trust each other. But at some devilish stage, military technological thought acquires a self-propelling momentum that threatens to bring countries to the brink of a catastrophe, although they might not want it. Armaments deepen mistrust. Medium- and shorter-range missiles can serve as an example of such a self-propelling momentum. They were produced because it was technically possible to make them. What a temptation! Then a function was found for them. Now they are being got rid of without detriment to the military balance.

So where is "another trap" that the professor's eagle eye has spotted? If, as he writes, what worries him is "the Soviet preponderance in conventional weapons," then one could refer him to three or four recent reports compiled by experts, including one by Senator Carl Levin issued in January, where the thesis of "preponderance" is questioned. But irrespective of that, his arguments about "another trap" reveal the use of the old methodological approach to the analysis of Soviet foreign policy, an approach which is unsuitable today and stems from preconceived ideas about Soviet expansionism.

Kissinger believes that if the democracies were to permit themselves to be mesmerized by the personality of the Soviet leader, however able and charming, it would be a sign of weakness.

But that's not the crux of the matter.

The crux lies in the fact that the Soivet search for a non-nuclear world is being met halfway in the West. An inadequate movement, in our opinion, but at least one that already exists.

The outsider Kissinger, who likes to teach everyone, is in a hurry to throw cold water on it.

Personally, he says, he does not believe that the abolition of all nuclear weapons is either desirable or possible. On the contrary he believes it to be absolutely impossible.

He adduces as an argument the vast size of the Soviet territory and asks how one can check where the Russians have hidden a couple of dozen missiles.

The same mistrust could be addressed to the American side: its territory is equally vast, and Alaska alone covers an enormous area.

This nihilism can only be refuted by increasing trust and the reasonable supposition that, as progress is made on disarmament, our countries will leave confrontation behind, and come closer to cooperation. The temptation to deceive will disappear.

In the book already mentioned Kissinger observed: "Foreign policy henceforce will have to be framed against the background of a world in which the 'conventional' technology is nuclear technology."

In the thirty-odd years that have passed since then, the world has failed to agree with the Professor. Nuclear arms have not become the conventional ones. They have to be destroyed.

And it looks as if the process of their destruction will begin shortly. On a modest scale, but it is nevertheless a beginning. ■

towards greater mutual trust. This is especially true of the INF treaty. The problem of nuclear arms reduction concerns us all. Journalists can learn a good lesson from it. One doesn't have to go into the technical details of the treaty to see that it is a model of openness and trust based on well-organized mutual verification. Why not draw on this experience in our work? For instance, if our Voice of America says something you consider wrong, it might be worth your while to refute it on the basis of documentary evidence. We would then be able to make the appropriate corrections in our programmes.

Statesmen are interviewed for the purpose of finding out their views rather than of imposing ours on them. Bearing this journalistic precept in mind, I refrained from reminding the USIA director of the fact that the Voice of America regularly supplies its listeners with misinformation about the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Indo-China; or that it has used "quotations from Lenin" actually copied from nazi propaganda publications; or.... Well, I don't think I need rehash all the rubbish we get from the VOA, but the fact remains that following our well-documented denials, the Voice has never apologized, admitted its error, or taken any other action.

But let's get back to the interview.

Mr Wick, speaking of the Voice of America, I'd like to ask you a question. You know that both the Voice and Radio Moscow operate on the short-wave band. But while in the U.S.S.R. almost all families have short-wave radios, most Americans prefer medium-wave ones. This imbalance was under discussion during your talks in Moscow. Has any progress been made in this field?

We did discuss this matter, he replied, and Soviet representatives called my attention to the imbalance, as well as to the fact that the U.S.S.R. is literally encirled with our relay stations. The chief difficulty is that in your country all radio stations are state-run, while ours are privately owned. So far we have not been able to allocate a vacant medium frequency band for incoming broadcasts. The air is occupied by private stations....

Does that mean that in order to listen in to Radio Moscow we must buy a radio station and a channel?

I don't think you can buy a radio station or a channel today, either. But then you can buy air time. Many private radio station owners will be only too pleased to do that by way of contributing to improved American-Soviet relations - provided, of course, that your programmes are acceptable to American listener, i.e., free of any propaganda whatsoever. Later, air time could be gradually prolonged.

Clearly there is ample room for improvement in the sphere of information exchange between us. And what, in your opinion, is the outlook for further Soviet-American cooperation in the field of culture?

The Americans are very interested in Russian culture, literature and music, Mr Wick said. As far back as I can remember, Bolshoi performances here have always drawn full houses. My fellow citizens want to know more about the life and work of your ordinary people, your farmers and intellectuals. Myself, I am an admirer of Russian classical music, poetry and fiction.

We have a lot to do if the process of cultural exchange is to go as it should, he continued. I hope we've now embarked on the road to trust and friendship. This cannot but have a beneficial effect on the sphere of culture, too.

It is very important to realize that in a world which we can destroy in thirty minutes a threat only serves to elicit a counterthreat, often a still more dangerous one. At the same time it is common knowledge that when people smile at one another, no war breaks out.

In parting, I thanked the USIA director for the marvellous job he had done in organizing the work of the press centre, whose staff was busy 24 hours a day helping seven thousand newsmen from all over the world to cover the summit.

We drew on the experience of Reykjavik and Geneva, and started preparing for the summit long in advance, Charles Wick explained.

Well, let both of us always draw upon past experience lest we should relapse into past mistakes....

EVGENY ANDRIANOV

Washington-Moscow

THE ARMED FORCES

New Times interviews Colonel General Vladimir Lobov, first deputy chief of the U.S.S.R. Armed Forces General Staff.

The Red Army was founded 70 years ago. The victory in the Great Patriotic War and the routing of fascism is a major landmark in its history. But some people in the West seem to forget this, turning the Red Army into a bogeyman. Are there any grounds for their fear?

The myth about the aggressiveness of the Red Army is as old as the Red Army itself. When 14 states moved their troops from all sides against Soviet Russia, Western propaganda began to disseminate the lie about an "invasion by the Bolshevik hordes." Since then it has constantly intimidated people with the "red threat." The more vigorous the fight for peace and the more peace initiatives the Soviet Union advances, the more subtle are the calumnies about the aggressiveness of the Soviet Army.

Now that the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles is a real possibility, the opponents of disarmament have again turned to the subject of U.S.S.R.'s "superiority" in conventional weapons, tanks in particular. Moreover, our tanks are said to have fantastic performance, for instance, the ability to reach the English Channel in a matter of hours. According to Western news reports, Britain has started forming anti-tank brigades to repel a Soviet tank attack in Europe.

The "Soviet threat" is a fabrication of the military-industrial complex of the West. It is actively used to influence the population and exert pressure on governments and public opinion with the aim of maintaining arms production as a source of profits.

The real, and very dangerous, threat to peace comes from the military-industrial complex, which has a very damaging effect on the entire system of international relations.

Defence of their country and the routing of aggression have traditionally been the chief tasks of the armed forces. In our time there can be no winner in a war. How is this concept treated by the Soviet Army? Have the goals and tasks of the army changed in a society which sees the prevention of war as its most important objective?

The first decree of the Soviet government was the Decree on Peace. The defence of our country has traditionally been considered the paramount task of the state and its Armed Forces.

The Programme of the CPSU and the documents of the 27th Party Congress point out that there will be no winners or losers in a global armed conflict. The task of averting war becomes particularly imperative in such circumstances. This makes it essential to raise the level of discipline and responsibility among servicemen, who must maintain a high degree of vigilance and improve their combat skill and preparedness. Defence of our country is a multifaceted concept. Who will gain the upper hand - the forces of peace or the forces of war? This depends on the contribution the Soviet Army makes to the cause of preventing war.

So, there can be winners, though not in nuclear war but in the struggle to avert it. The Soviet Armed Forces today defend both their own homeland and world peace.

There are two military blocs in Europe - the Organization of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. Both blocs claim that their doctrines have a defensive character. But military confrontation is not over. In what way can the two blocs prove the sincerity of their intentions?

Let me say first of all that the doctrinal principles of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO are not the same, and that this explains the continued military confrontation. The chief objective of the Warsaw Treaty's military doctrine is prevention of war, while NATO's military doctrine contains aggressive provisions aimed at destroying socialism as a social and political system.

"Socialism resolutely rejects war as a means of settling political and economic contradictions and ideological disputes between states," the 27th Congress of the CPSU pointed out. This determines the Soviet Union's fundamental policy of strengthening international security and peace by carrying out a complex of measures and programmes for broader international cooperation in the field of disarmament.

NATO regards war and combat operations not as an inadmissible form of interstate relations, but as a practical instrument for settling disputes and problems in its favour. This explains why NATO recognizes the U.S. concept of conflicts of high, medium and low intensity. To a certain extent, this concept found expression in the armed conflict unleashed by Britain against Argentina over the Falkland Islands in 1982, in the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983, the U.S. air attack on Libya, the armed intervention of France in the affairs of Chad, and other actions.

Do you see any possibility of cooperation with NATO in building a complex of confidence-building measures?

Mikhail Gorbachev pointed to the possibility of cooperation with NATO in the provision of confidence-building measures: "We should lay our cards on the table, exchange all the data, evaluate them, clarify the assymetry in armaments and troops, and start tackling the problems. Such is our approach."

The members of both alliances have declared that in their international relations they strictly observe the

AND NEW THINKING

principles laid down in the U.N. Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. Under the Stockholm agreements, they already practise such confidence-building measures as notification of military exercises and the invitation of observers to monitor them.

The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty states have called on NATO countries to reduce the arms and troop concentration on their contact line to a minimum agreed level, remove the most dangerous offensive weapons from this zone, set up a nuclear-free corridor along the contact line of the two blocs, and create in Europe zones free of nuclear and chemical weapons and with a lower concentration of armaments, and zones of enhanced confidence. All this is possible to achieve by mutual agreement and effort.

Democratization is perhaps the most important process now taking place in our country. It has spread to the army too. But what does democratization mean in the army?

All the processes taking place in socialist society find their reflection in the Armed Forces as well. Perestroika in the army means a cardinal readjustment of mechanisms which have inhibited progress, the elimination of stagnant phenomena, and constructive, productive activity to improve the state of affairs in every field.

The whole complex of social relations is to be found in the army, which fully reflects the democratic character of our social system. Far from contradicting the service's regulations, democratism emphasizes the socialist nature of our Armed Forces. Of course, the process of democratization in the army and navy has its specific features, because one-man command, discipline and the execution of orders have to be combined with broad participation by Party and Young Communist League branches and all personnel in all affairs of military units.

The basic idea of democratization is that servicemen should be trusted more and display greater initiative and independence in their activity. The responsibility for the job entrusted to servicemen is being raised too. A creative approach by servicemen to their duties, and boldness in the tackling of complex problems help in the end considerably to enhance their self-awareness.

The new political thinking is clearly reflected in the foreign policy of our country. In what way has the new thinking influenced Soviet military doctrine?

One of the basic realities of the present-day world is that there is no acceptable alternative to peaceful coexistence between countries with opposed socio-political systems. The new thinking engendered by the modern world persistently calls for an end to the arms race and a search for ways of disarmament. These principles have found their reflection in Soviet military doctrine, which represents a system of basic views on the prevention of war and armed forces development.

Soviet military doctrine has a defensive character, with defence regarded as the principal form of military operation in repelling aggression. Proceeding from this, the Soviet Union is building up its Armed Forces on the principle of adequate defence.

Such an important doctrinal provision as renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons also accords with the new thinking. In this lies the fundamental distinction between Soviet military doctrine and NATO's doctrine, which provides for the first use of nuclear weapons under certain circumstances.

We often speak of education through historical example. How is such education conducted in the army?

The inculcation of a cautious attitude to the past and to tradition and continuity in our historical development should occupy a special place in the training of future defenders of our country. Young people joining the army must clearly realize what they have been called upon to defend.

Our patriotism is inseparable from our history. The sources of one's love for one's country may differ, but the main thing here is unquestionably a knowledge of its history.

We have always drawn our strength from history. This was particularly evident in the years of trial that befell the Soviet people. This continuity was strikingly revealed during the Great Patriotic War. It is no accident that the orders of Alexander Nevsky, Bogdan Khmelnitsky, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Ushakov and Nakhimov were instituted in those stern years.

Education through historical example and the heoric past, through revolutionary and combat traditions, should determine our whole approach in training the present generation of defenders of our country.

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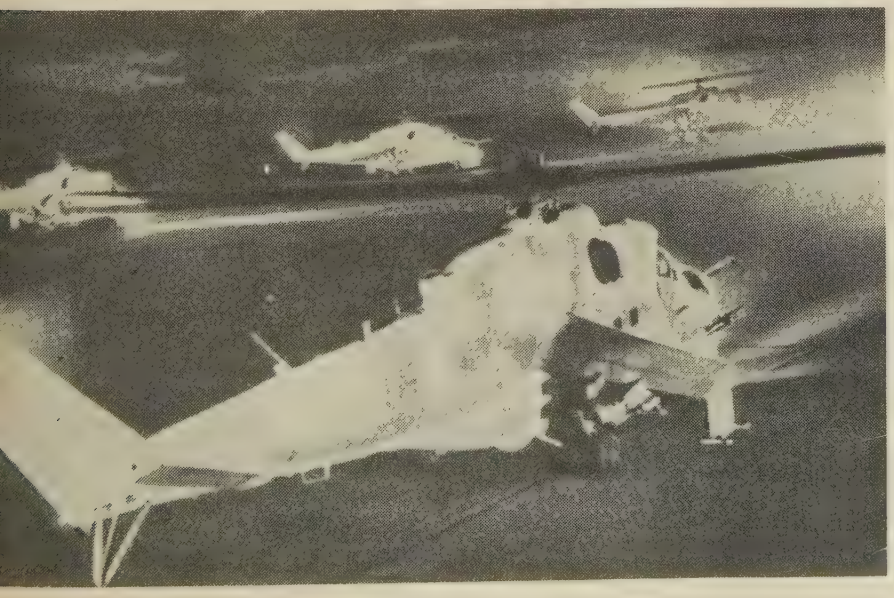
Photo by V. Ankov



RULES OF COLLECTIVE FARMS

LEV VOSKRESENSKI

In March 1988, the Fourth All-Union Collective Farmers' Congress is to examine and approve the new Model Collective Farm Rules. This document will play a role of paramount importance, as it will govern the economic and social life of the peasant producer cooperative. It will be its fundamental law, so to speak. Therefore, the introduction of the new Rules can be regarded as an outstanding development with far-reaching consequences in the country's economic, social and political life.

The day the Draft Model Collective Farm Rules were published I carefully went through the document. If you really want to know what changes are to take place on collective farms and in the countryside in general, I suggest you do the same. It will not take much time.

To get a clear idea I would suggest that you take the text of the old Rules adopted in November 1969. Put a red pencil through the clauses experience itself has deleted and underline all the new clauses in the text of the Draft. The difference between the old and the new will at once be evident.

The obvious conclusion is that the new fundamental law of the collective farm is designed to effect economic reform and democratization.

The mechanism of self-management has been worked out in greater detail. Every component (member) of the mechanism (collective farmer, team, board and chairman) enjoys greater rights and at the same time shoulders greater responsibility, economic responsibility to be exact. This is fully in keeping with the basic principles of self-sufficiency and self-financing. Glasnost (openness) has been legally consolidated in the Rules. The general meeting - the highest management body - is endowed with broad powers. From now on the rule is that several nominees shall be put forward for election to the post of collective farm chairman.

Incidentally, the chairman shall henceforth be released from his post, even if he is being transferred to another job, only by decision of the general meeting. The old Rules lay down that the leader of a lower production unit, such as a team, has less standing than the collective farm board, chairman and chief specialists. The new Draft Rules add: "the general meeting," which comes first. The team can impose a punishment on the leader or propose to replace him (or her), if he (or she) has failed to justify the confidence of its members.

As the present author sees it, the main point here is for collective farm members to learn to use their rights in everyday life, and not intermittently in the event of an emergency. In other words, the democratic code should be constantly practised. It should not be a "reserve" of unrealized possibilities.

The switchover from administrative methods to economic incentives

And now, the sphere of production and finance. Non-economic levers formerly set in motion by the higher authority are gradually being discarded as the collective farms acquire a greater degree of economic independence. However, it would be fair to say that, though this process is developing rather slowly, a new system of relations is taking shape between the collective farm and the state. Being in the privileged position of the main customer, the state is switching over from administrative methods of management to a system of price and financial-credit regulation, and incentives.

The new Rules will enable the collective farm to establish economic relations with the state on principles which are now increasingly frequently being referred to as the socialist market.

Advanced forms of labour organization, such as the collective, family, or individual contract have been legalized. As distinct from the old Rules, the Draft does not regard the leasing of land as an unlawful transaction. This is unquestionably a major achievement. From now on it will be possible to rent buildings, structures, equipment, implements, raw materials and other assets from the collective farm.

A whole range of limits on the development of personal auxiliary economies are being abolished, as these are to be granted the status of "components of socialist agricultural production." This means that a collective farmer's personal plot shall no longer be regarded as something of secondary importance, or as totally insignificant. Nor will it be treated as a stepchild, because now it is an equal member of the economic family.

Collective farm products for export

The collective farm has been insured another right, namely that of fixing its own prices on the products it sells through its own trade network, on the market, through consumer cooperatives and other organizations. However, the part of the produce to be delivered to the state on contract is to be sold at fixed purchasing prices.

So far, I have dealt with new developments that have been given legal form, legalized, so to say, after having become established in practice, though not without difficulty, over the last few years. In contrast with the above, the clause on the right of the collective farm to sell its products on the foreign market is a real sensation. It reads as follows:

"The collective farm can, in keeping with established procedure, participate in international cooperative organizations, enter into and develop trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural contacts and collaborate with agricultural cooperatives and other enterprises in CMEA member countries, as well as with enterprises and companies in capitalist and developing countries."

A careful analysis of the new Rules will enable the parties concerned to draw useful conclusions. I am certain that business people have already done so.

The discussions of the Draft Rules at the Collective Farmers' Congress will be equally exciting. I am sure there will also be criticism.

Have all reserves been tapped?

The new Rules are a step forward as compared with the preceding Rules. Despite this, I cannot help forming the impression that the locally accumulated fund of ideas and practical solutions has not been wholly reflected in the Draft. Far from it. As I see it, practice is ahead of the Draft. The new document, if I may say so, has not exhausted the political and social potential. Nor has it removed all the obstacles to intensive socio-economic development. There are still a few unnecessary restrictions.

For instance, what is meant by: "a

collective farm can, in keeping with established procedure, develop contacts with foreign organizations and companies"? It is not clear who establishes the above procedure. How is it done? Will it not kill a good idea? Evidently, the mechanism for foreign trade links should be clear to every collective farm chairman and, ideally, to every collective farmer. It is the collective farmer who is master of the collective farm. It logically follows that the relevant documents should be made public.

Here is another example. "The collective farm is a socialist agricultural enterprise which functions on the basis of complete independence and self-management, on principles of democratic economic management in combination with state guidance." In theory, everything is clear. But is it clear in practical terms? In what proportion is "complete independence" combined with "state guidance"? The Draft replies to this delicate question only partially and in rather general terms. The answer leaves some loopholes for those who wish (and know how) to use the old and tried methods of administrative pressure.

Of course, nobody questions the priority right of the state as the main customer and partner. As in the past, the contract for the delivery of farm products first and foremost to the state forms the basis for planning on a collective farm. But if the state order is equal or nearly equal to the collective farm's output of marketable products, this will certainly bind it hand and foot and crush all initiative. It will be the collective farm that sets the prices on the market or its own trade network, by agreement with customers while executing a transaction and bargaining with them. However, the relations with the state are stipulated in clear-cut and rigid terms: there will be no bargaining here. But what will happen if the collective farm finds it unprofitable to grow the product the state has ordered? Or, in other words, what if the collective farm finds it more profitable to supply another product?

N. Tereshchenko, chairman of a Stavropol collective farm, having a talk with workers at the farm's pelletized feed factory.

Let us assume that a given collective farm could switch over to the production of soya, but the state wants sunflower above all. The collective farm has no spare land. As a result, it will be compelled to cultivate sunflower to the detriment of soya. At the same time, there are collective farms in a neighbouring region, which would prefer to grow sunflower. But Customer Number One says: "No, I want you to grow mainly wheat!" Not far away, conditions may be particularly favourable for wheat, but in this case the state wants the collective farms to produce sugar beet. In practice, such blunders are not infrequent.

Of course, state orders are corrected, and errors such as the above, are removed (the example has been deliberately simplified for clarity's sake). But readjustment takes time. As a rule, it is made just before a new five-year plan is launched. If they are late, the farms have to wait another five years.

The 27th CPSU Congress offered another, more rational, and more flexible mode of action. The state gets what it needs from the collective farms with the help of such an effective lever as the credit-finance and tax system. And, of course, the state order should be much smaller in volume than the collective farm's output of marketable products.

The authors of the Draft have failed to work out a mechanism for economic relations of this kind with sufficient clarity. This means that the delegates to the forthcoming Congress who will have the final say on the Draft will have a lot of work to do.

In establishing a reasonable balance between hopes and doubts, it would be fair to say that the course of reform and democratization of economic life that the new Rules have proclaimed is half the battle, but only half.

Not infrequently everything looks nice and tidy on paper. But we should be careful about the pitfalls. In life there are plenty of them. Will we master the art of avoiding them? Time and practice will show how well we are equipped to do so. ■

THE U.S.S.R. IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Public education

According to the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics, in 1987 there were 164.3 million people in the country with complete or incomplete higher and secondary education, inclusive of 20.8 million with complete higher education, as against 1.2 million in 1939.

General-educational and vocational schools are being reorganized. During the 1986/87 academic year, there were 1.4 million first-formers (in Soviet schools first form is the lowest grade) studying under the new 11-year programme; of this number, one million were at general-education schools, and 0.4 million at kindergartens. Of senior pupils, 4.3 million are already taking courses in basic information computer science. Enterprises patronizing the schools have made 1.4 million work places available for pupils to engage in socially useful labour.

Full time general-educational schools of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Education had a teaching staff of 2,635,000 at the start of the 1986/87 school year.

To date, the phased pay increases for school teachers and other educationalists as envisaged in the programme for reforming general-educational and vocational schools have been completed as a result (school teachers will have increases in earnings of almost a third) to average 190 rubles as of April last. ■

VILNIUS IN CHICAGO?

HOW LITHUANIAN AMERICANS LIVE

VILIUS KAVALAUSKAS

As I was sorting out the archive of writer and Communist Roy Mizara, a prominent figure in the American workers' movement, I discovered several sheets, yellow with age, dating back 50-odd years. They were the letters the author Upton Sinclair wrote to inquire about the response to his novel "The Jungle" from American workers of Lithuanian origin.

Stockyards of "The jungle"

Upton Sinclair's novel is set in the community of Lithuanian immigrants who worked in the famous Chicago abattoirs. I travelled to the place where the stockyards once stood, together with John Jokubka, editor of the progressive Lithuanian newspaper Vilnis, published in Chicago. The abattoirs were closed and torn down after the last ram was slaughtered there with much pomp and circumstance in 1971. The odour of blood and excrement that impregnated the ground still haunts the site, and that is the reason why major companies are in no hurry to move their property to this otherwise convenient location, not far from downtown. A number of companies are planning, however, to build warehouses there, but before these plans materialize, the ground will have to be covered by a thick layer of macadam and concrete.

The only physical reminder of the stockyards in this desolate place is an arch crowned with a bull's head. It is the gateway to the stockyards preserved by the decision of the city authorities as a historic monument. The arch had been given a fresh coat of paint, but plaster had already peeled off the bull's horns and a four-letter word had been scrambled on the wall.

Leading through the arch is a stretch of a red-brick road polished to a sheen by thousands, or perhaps even millions of feet.

The stockyards are within a stone's throw of Bridgeport, where thousands of my fellow countrymen settled at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, having fled across the ocean from the Czar's rule of terror, and later, from the repression of the bourgeois government. In Cicero, another suburb of Chicago, Lithuanian emigrants toiled in the inferno of the Pullman factories. Those who lived in Bridgeport worked in the stockyards.

My guide was born here just under 80 years ago. Together with his parents he returned to Lithuania, but poverty forced him to cross the ocean again and work on plantations in Brazil and Uruguay. He was jailed for his revolutionary work there. John Jokubka knows the history of Bridgeport well. He showed me the Irish inn where Upton Sinclair collected material for his novel and where he wrote it.

"The jungle" was a bomb shell in America. President Theodore Roosevelt had to appoint a comission of inquiry into the labour and living conditions of stockyard workers. All that remained for the commission to do, however, was to confirm what had been portrayed by the novel. The commission found out that canned meat was soaked not only in sweat, but, on occasion, in human blood as well, and that human flesh sometimes found its way into the cans.

Collecting material for his novel, Upton Sinclair met with Lithuanian Socialists in Chicago. When the right-wing press launched a smear campaign against him, the left-wing papers of the Lithuanian community wholeheartedly defended him.

The road that leads to the stockyards is now covered with junk. Nothing remains of the Lithuanian pubs in Halsted street. A few old men will tell you about the daring pilots Darius and Girenas. They raised money here for their reckless and fatal attempt to cross the Atlantic after the bourgeois government of Lithuania had turned down their appeal for help. The old men remember another pioneer of Transatlantic flight, Felix Vaitkus, who was also born here, in Bridgeport Street, now named Lithuanica after his aeroplane.

Chicago cemetery

The men and women portrayed by Upton Sinclair do not live here any more. Most of them now reside in a place from which none return - the national cemetery of Chicago Lithuanians.

It is hard to say why such a remote site was chosen for the cemetery in 1911. It takes half an hour of rapid driving to reach the place at the end of 79th street. In those days a horse-drawn hearse took half a day to get there.

The national cemetery now is part of the history of those Lithuanians who found themselves on the other side of the Atlantic. Buried here are the physical remains and aspirations of people who went into exile of their own free will or under duress and died far from their native land.

More than 70 years ago, the Lithuanian proletarian writer Bronius Laucevicius-Vargsas was laid to rest here. A participant in the 1905 revolution in Russia, he brought with him to America his passion for revolutionary struggle and his skill as a labour organizer. His short stories were published by the Lithuanian Socialist weekly Kova in Philadelphia and his plays were staged by amateur companies. In many ways he followed in Maxim Gorky's footsteps and even bore a facial resemblance to the great proletarian writer. He died when he was just over 30.

The publishers and editors of the progressive newspaper Vilnis are also buried here. There is a five-pointed star on the grave of Fredas Abekas, an American journalist who came to Soviet Russia to see the dawning of the new age. When the bourgeois government convened the "World Congress of Lithuanians" in 1935 Fredas Abekas publicly described the regime of President Smetona as fascist and demanded the release of political prisoners, and democratic reforms. There is an elegant monument on the grave of Leonas Pruseika who for many years edited the left-wing newspapers Laisve and Vilnis. It was sculpted by the Soviet artist Professor Konstantinas Bogdanas. Leonas Pruseika saw the inside of czarist and American jails. In his impassioned pamphlets he welcomed the restoration of Soviet government in Lithuania.

A hammer and sickle hewn here in stone is an unusual sight for an American cemetery. Reactionary emigrants avoid this neighbourhood; they would rather be buried in less prestigious parishes away from their "godless" fellow countrymen.

Vilius Kavalauskas is an own correspondent of the Tiesa newspaper, Vilnius, in the U.S.A.

The newspaper Vilnis founded nearly 70 years ago still comes regularly off the presses. Its publishers and editors have worked hard, ignoring fatigue, for years. They raised funds for their paper in Lithuanian communities all over the United States. The costs are rising all the time, and that is why the newsprint they use is not of the best quality and the paper is not sold in the streets.

The windows of the editorial office on the ground floor are safely protected against vandals. All too often they have been shattered by red bricks hurled by reactionaries. Lately such attacks have become less frequent. The last time a brick was hurled at a window here was during a concert by a People's Artist of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic Vaclovas Daunoras. But there are other ways of dealing with a newspaper. The publishers of Vilnis were dragged through one law suit after another for nearly ten years to force them to sell the 500,000-dollar club owned by the paper for 10,000 dollars. The left-wing club in Chicago was an eyesore to anti-Soviet elements. The club's hall seating twelve hundred was always packed when Soviet artists came to perform.

St. Ánne's Church in Vilnius, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. Napoleon planned to take the cathedral to Paris.
TASS photo

They worked for Hitler

For some time in Chicago, the clock froze in 1940. At one time the clerical figure and geographer Kazys Pakstas proposed that Lithuania be moved to the territory of Honduras or Angola. The man who urged Lithuanians to move to warmer climes died in Chicago, swept by the cold winds that blow from Lake Michigan, where old folk complain of humidity and rheumatic pains. It was to this place, however, that those who owned real estate and factories in Kaunas, or served in the fascist police during the nazi occupation, brought their own Lithuania.

Obsessed with hate for everybody, the Soviet government, the Black Mayor of Chicago, and even their closest neighbours, they want to know nothing of what is going on in the world at large. In order to preserve the illusion of their "own Lithuania," they'd never open a book published in Lithuania now, visit their native land with a tourist group, or meet with anyone who has been there.

Various foundations have millions of dollars to burn. The leaders of the "supreme committee for the liberation of Lithuania" and the "alliance of American Lithuanians" use the money to throw parties or go on "business trips" in the company of wives and girl-friends to Europe or Australia. They are never forthcoming when a Saturday Lithuanian school appeals for help (the million-strong Lithuanian community in the U.S.A. has failed to preserve a single Lithuanian high school), or when a talented scientist or author is short of money to publish a good book that does not smear life in the Soviet Union.

In recent years, the right-wing emigrants have been trying to unite. Postwar refugees brought 17 political parties across the ocean. The parties that existed under the bourgeois government splintered into more factions in America. For many years running, various émigré groups have been filing suits against each other in order to win the right to be called the "world Lithuanian community."

There is one thing, though, on which the anti-Communist alliances of Lithuanian emigrants of every colour agree. All of them are out to whitewash the war criminals who collaborated with the nazis and took part in the mass executions of Soviet citizens during WW II. Several collaborationists moved to the U.S. from the western zone of Germany in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The U.S. authorities knew full well who was stepping onto American soil, just as they knew who Klaus Barbie was, but they hoped that Lithuanian anti-Communists might come in handy.

One Bronius Ausrofas, an earstwhile agent of the political investigations branch of the plice in bourgeois Lithuania, and later a nazi intelligence agent, was sent to Guatemala by the CIA. There he took part in the toppling of the liberal Arbenz government. A veteran of anti-Communist agencies, he now resides in St. Petersburg, Florida, and has a reputation as a valuable secret service agent.

The documents of the Lithuanian branch of the Gestapo are stored at the State Archive of the Lithuanian SSR in Vilnius. Reading them, I came across the name of a man whom I had seen in Chicago on several occasions. He is Bishop Vincentas Brizgys, appointed by the Pope to be the spiritual leader of all Lithuanians abroad. In a letter to the head of the security service of the Third Reich, the chief of the Lithuanian branch of the Gestapo named among other services rendered by him his cooperation with the "appropriate agencies of Germany" before the war. The bishop is on the official list of war criminals residing in the United States, but émigré organizations are giving him their protection.

I met the people who continue to support the nazis at an anti-Soviet demonstration in Washington on December 8. The right-wing emigrants from the Baltic

republics took to the streets to protest against the Soviet-American INF treaty. Under that treaty, medium- and shorter-range missiles deployed in the Baltic republics are to be scrapped, and the probability of a nuclear attack on the region is reduced. Why are those who are vociferous about their "love" for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia opposed to this?

A view of Lithuania from Capitol Hill

I met three Congressmen at the demonstration. In a bid to attract votes, or perhaps guided by their convictions, a handful of senators and congressmen specialize in "Baltic affairs." The U.S. administration has not recognized the Baltic republics to this day.

Several years ago, an American chargé d'affaires visited Vilnius. It was raining heavily, but he refused to be driven in a car provided by the government so as not to deviate from the administration's policy of not recognizing Lithuania.

The "embassies" and "consulates" of regimes that ceased to exist many years ago are still there. The remnants of the gold reserve of the three prewar republics are being squandered. At the moment, the gold is in the coffers of the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank. In the early 1920s it was handed over to the bourgeois republics by Soviet Russia. Every year the "ambassadors" receive official greetings from the U.S. Secretary of State and once in a blue moon they are invited to the White House.

Leafing through congressional records, I came across the word "Lithuania" and decided to see what American legislators have to say about my native republic.

Besides special dates, the favourite topic of speakers is recorded as "human rights in Soviet Lithuania" where, needless to say, the Church and believers are persecuted, and churches are being closed down as there aren't enough priests.

My vacation in Vilnius coincided with the celebrations for the 600th anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania. I visited the festive cathedrals and brought my acquaintances in New York and Chicago the richly illustrated album "The Church in Lithuania" and jubilee medals minted in Vilnius.

The jubilee of the Lithuanian Church was also celebrated in Rome, and a representative delegation of the Lithuanian clergy went along. Extremely annoyed by this development, the supreme committee for the liberation of Lithuania issued a statement accusing the Vatican of having failed to stage an anti-Soviet show.

As far as parishes that close down are concerned, I cannot say that theological schools are very popular with young people, but American Catholics, and especially those representing ethnic groups, face the same problem. A New Yorker once showed me Lithuanian parishes that had been closed down in Brooklyn. The very sight of the churches with empty window frames and walls covered with graffiti makes even an atheist feel uneasy. Two more Lithuanian parishes have just closed down in Chicago because of the indifference of parishioners and the shortage of Lithuanian priests.

The head of a Lithuanian parish in Manhattan Vytautas Palubinskas saved a church for his parish, having agreed to move to New York from Buenos Aires. Father Vytautas visits Lithuania every year, and he told me that he dearly wished he had similar conditions in America.

Dialogue with the Motherland

There are Lithuanian emigrants who are concerned about the fate of the cultural and historic treasures of the Lithuanian people abroad. Not long ago I was told by some emigrants who have collected many works of art and historic treasures that all of them should of course be restored to Lithuania, but "the place would be dangerous in the event of a nuclear war." These arguments are rendered invalid by the course of history.

Many collections bequeathed to émigré centers have been lost, sold for a song, or thrown into trash cans by the inheritors who cannot speak their mother tongue. The libraries of American universities do not have enough storage space for English- language archives and aren't at all eager to keep documents in an incomprehensible language. An émigreé newspaper has suggested that its readers order books in the Lithuanian language at the library of Pennsylvania University, not to read, but to show that there is a demand for them so that they are not thrown away. A sad suggestion, isn't it?

Here is another sad story. The small but active Lithuianian community in Toronto bought a rare 17th-century Lithuanian volume and presented it to the Mayor of the city to show its gratitude for his attention to ethnic minorities. A week later somebody saw the present in a second-hand book store. The page with the dedication had been torn out and the book was priced at 10 dollars.

Unique documents have found their way across the ocean. The founder of the Lithuanian Communist Party Vincas Mickevicius-Kapsukas lived here before the revolution and published left-wing newspapers. Authors of Lithuanian classics worked here, and some families have kept their manuscripts and letters. There have been some surprising finds. For instance, a unique collection of leaflets of the Soviet Resistance Movement distributed in the nazi-occupied Lithuania was handed over to the Lithuanian government last year.

A prominent artist from Massachusetts has offered us a large collection of old maps and Lithuanian books of the 15th-18th centuries valued at millions of dollars. There are documentary sound recordings of the revolutionary events in Lithuania in 1940.

The changes taking place in the Soviet Union and its readiness to enter into dialogue have encouraged many emigrants to make contacts with their native land. The well-known New York artist Kazimieras Zoromskis donated 300-odd works to Lithuanian museums and eighteen months ago returned to Vilnius and applied for Soviet citizenship. Over the past two years alone, about a thousand paintings, sculptures, stained-glass windows, and drawings have been transferred from the United States to museums in Lithuania. They have been gratefully received by our Cultural Fund. The books and archives went to the University. The New York sculptor Vytautas Kasuba has donated a bas-relief on a historic theme, which is to be installed at Trakai Castle.

Prominent émigré authors and artists realize how rewarding their contacts with their native land are, but the path to this realization is a thorny one. A Lithuanian language teacher in Chicago Juozas Kreivenas told me that the Boston poet Stasys Santvaras who published a book in Soviet Lithuania found a brick on his doorstep one day. He expressed the wish that the "gift" be put in his coffin. "They tarred my door," the teacher told me, "but I cannot have that taken to the cemetery." He died some months ago. He bequeathed his priceless musical archive to Soviet Lithuania.

Recently, the most numerous émigré group, the World Lithuanian Community, decided to lift the ban on contacts with Lithuania. I wonder whether the White House in carrying on its policy of non-recognition, is at all sure that it is acting in keeping with the sentiments and wishes of the majority, at least of Lithuanian emigrants.

Chicago-New York

What happened in February, 1948

VACLAV CADA, Czechoslovak publicist

Forty years have passed since the memorable days in February 1948 when the Czechoslovak working people emerged victorious from the decisive clash with internal and external reactionary forces. It was then that the fundamental problem of socialist revolution - of political power in the country - was resolved.

But even today, particularly in connection with the jubilee, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is being accused of "taking power" by force in February 1948 and staging a "military putsch" which allegedly "stamped out all democratic, constitutional forms of public life."

40 years is a considerable period. With the passage of time many things are forgotten, while others are distorted. The facts should be examined to arrive at a correct assessment of the events. What really happened in February 1948 in Prague?

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One of the principal features of the revolutionary process in Czechoslovakia was that the working class took political power peacefully, with strict observance of the constitutional norms. And this happened in an industrialized country ruled by the bourgeoisie, which had considerable political experience.

Czechoslovakia's liberation by the Soviet Army inspired the hope of a solution for the problems of its national-democratic development. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia demanded the nationalization of key industries immediately after the first postwar government programme was adopted in Kosice in April 1945. The country embarked on a course of consolidating the gains of the people's democratic revolution and growing over into a socialist revolution. A wide-ranging alliance of all patriotic forces - the working class noted for its revolutionary consciousness, the peasantry, and the progressive intelligentsia - was formed. Alongside Communists, this alliance included members of Social Democratic, National Socialist, People's, and Slovak Democratic parties.

The development and intensification of the revolutionary process, however, came up against the growing resistance of reaction. In February 1948, a group of ministers belonging to petty-bourgeois political parties, openly opposed the revolutionary changes in Czechoslovakia. They decided to stage a palace coup to overthrow the existing cabinet and form their own government with the assistance of the President of the Republic, Eduard Benes.

Staromestske Square in the morning of February 21, 1948.

At a cabinet meeting on February 13, in the absence of the then minister of the interior Vaclav Nosek, representatives of the right-wing parties in the cabinet overruled personnel changes in the national security corps over the minister's head. Furthermore, they decided to boycott cabinet meetings until the decision had been implemented.

The matter was referred to the government. But as the representatives of the right-wing parties did not turn up for the meeting scheduled for February 20, it was not held. President Benes was informed of the intention of ministers representing the National Socialist, People's and Democratic parties to resign. This was a challenge to the ruling coalition led by Klement Gottwald and entailed the risk of a cabinet crisis.

The Communist Party countered the threat of a putsch by enlisting the support of the working class and its allies - representatives of other parties in the government coalition. On that same day, February 20, Klement Gottwald approached Benes to suggest a way out of the crisis. As 14 government members, including Communists, Social Democrats and non-party figures (among them General Ludvik Svoboda and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk), had held onto their posts, and as they constituted the majority in the 26-member cabinet, the President, in full accordance with the Constitution, was able to accept the resignation of the reactionary ministers and replace them with people who had not been compromised.

Benes was inclined to seek agreement with the opposition, whereas Gottwald refused to conduct talks with those who had put themselves outside the National Front and opposed the government programme. Closely followed by people all over Europe, the political drama in Hradcany reached its zenith.

Next day, on Saturday, February 21, thousands of people gatherered in Prague's Staromestske Square at 10. a.m. Klement Gottwald came out onto the balcony of an old building. He spoke of the situation that had emerged in the cabinet and ways of ending the crisis. He called on all conscientious citizens to form National

Front action committees to oppose any manoeuvres by the reactionaries. By evening rallies had swept the country. In Bratislava, Gustav Husak, chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners, the organ of state power, notified those commissioners who were members of the Slovak Democratic Party that the resignation of the ministers in Prague was also being seen as the resignation of members of that party from the Board, who would therefore be relieved of their duties in the days that followed. The main public organizations - trade unions, youth organizations - expressed support for the Gottwald government. Headquarters of the people's militia were set up in Prague. Workers took up arms.

On February 24, left-wing groups in the National Socialist and People's parties opposed to the policy of their leaders started talks with representatives of the government majority on entering the new government of the revived National Front. Mass meetings were held in the streets of Prague and other cities. They culminated in a one-hour strike in support of the Gottwald cabinet. Patrols of armed workers guarded industrial enterprises in Prague from the morning of February 25. Officials in the President's office processed thousands of telegrams demanding that the ministers who had compromized themselves should resign.

...4:30 p.m. The President accepted the resignation of the reactionary politicians and signed a decree endorsing the new government formed by Klement Gottwald. The news at once swept the country. And in the evening armed units of the people's militia marched through the streets of Prague, greeted by thousands. The historic victory had been won.

The "palace coup" launched by members of the reactionary political groups had been nipped in the bud, and by peaceful means. Not a single shot was fired during the February events.

The working class of Czechoslovakia had proved that it would not let its historic chance slip. Political power went to the Communists and non-party people, Catholics and atheists, trade unionists and workers in the arts who were united in the National Front, which became the basis of Czechoslovakia's political system.

On May 9 the National Assembly adopted the new Czechoslovak Constitution, which cemented the revolutionary gains the people had acquired in February.

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The further development of democracy is one of the main items on the agenda at the new stage of socialist construction in Czechoslovakia. We pin great hopes on the programme for restructuring economic, political, ideological and public life in Czechoslovakia. This programme is comparable in its importance with the revolutionary transformations of February 1948.

Prague

Dialogue with a Sovietologist

Stephen Cohen answers Soviet students' questions

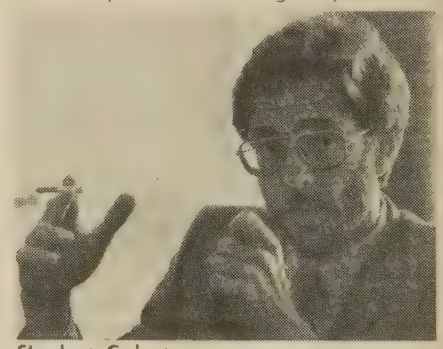
At exactly the time appointed, he walked onto the stage, hung his jacket on the back of a chair and loosened his tie as if preparing for an uphill job. He is lean and very light on his feet. This time the American sovietologist was to address students and professors at the Moscow Institute of History and Archives. Stephen Cohen is director of the Russian Studies course at Princeton University. He is a distinguished scholar and his work is well known in many countries.

Opening the discussion, the rector of the Institute, Dr Yuri Afanasiev, said that Dr Cohen's appearance at the Institute was an exceptional event, although contacts of this kind should become a rule. For a long time we've considered Western sovietology to be, at best, capable of supplying piles of assorted facts, but we now know that this is not so. This does not mean, however, that we are prepared to accept an eclectic approach, abandon our principles, or refrain from argument. The most important thing is that students should be able to form their own opinions of the work of Western historians.

Dr Stephen Cohen is not a liberal. Nor is he a conservative. His books have often aroused criticism at both ends of the political spectrum in the United States. Is he an absolutely independent scholar? No, this can hardly be said of him. He has said himself that politization can be of great value in research and that scientists objecting on ethical grounds against any politically oriented studies or ties with state institutions have no right to criticise the policy of the government. At the same time Dr Cohen supports an intellectual freedom that can accommodate unorthodox views.

But let us go back to the Moscow Institute of History and Archives.

Dr Cohen. I've had a very dull life. I was born in Kentucky, went to a big name University in Indiana and got my Ph. D. at



Stephen Cohen.

Columbia University. At the moment I teach at Princeton. I write regularly on Soviet affairs for the magazine The Nation, published in New York. I have two children and two hobbies, history and basketball.

The subject of my thesis was the life of Nikolai Bukharin. That work was included in a book published in 1973, and later translated and published in many countries including China. I cannot say that the book changed the views of other scholars, but at any rate it did cause heated debates.

About 25 years ago American scholars tended to take an orthodox view of the history of Soviet society. They saw no difference between the communist society for which Lenin had worked and the society that existed under Stalin. They believed that the tragic events of the

1930s were logical and inevitable. Most Western historians believed, for instance, that the New Economic Policy of the 1920s was merely a tactical manoeuvre. Nikolai Bukharin believed that it paved the way to socialism. He spoke of the need for a balanced economy and competition.

There are differences among Western scholars on this fundamental issue today. I agree with Dr Afanasiev, who has said in a newspaper article that good questions are better than dogmatic answers. Today I would like you to ask questions in person so I could look you in the eyes. I would also like to learn as much as I can about you at this meeting.

Question. What is your view of Nikolai Bukharin?

S.C. Nikolai Bukharin was a prominent politician and theorist. He wrote comprehensive Marxist textbooks. He was a thinking man. He believed that real progress in the economy as much as in other areas must rely on peace, harmony, and cooperation. A society at war with itself cannot be productive or prosperous.

Question. In your book about Nikolai Bukharin you seemed to paint too rosy a picture of his life. Consciously or unconsciously, you did not discuss his attitudes to the Soviet intelligentsia.

S.C. I am not interested in representing anyone in a good or a bad light. Let us rely on the facts. Nikolai Bukharin did indeed engage in heated polemics with members of the Russian intelligentsia, among them Sergei Yesenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky and perhaps many others, but that is quite normal. Take his conflict with Academician Pavlov. After Bukharin had criticized him, Pavlov spoke ill of him in a lecture. The next day Bukharin phoned Pavlov and invited him to a friendly breakfast. Amends were made and the conflict was settled. It transpired that both had the same hobby, collecting butterflies.

Here is another fact. The Association of Proletarian Writers appealed to the Central Committee of the Party to establish control over literature. Nikolai Bukharin compiled a report on the issue. The resolution and ruling of the Central Committee were published and can be found in libraries. Nikolai Bukharin said then: "If party writers want to be popular they must write accordingly." He also made the famous statement that "we need a hundred colours in literature." That was the subject of his debate with poets.

Question. Have you anything to say about Bukharin's attitudes towards fascism?

S.C. When I was writing the book and approaching the years 1933 and 1934, I realized that Nikolai Bukharin was gravely concerned about fascism. I am not one hundred per cent sure, but it would seem that two points of view on fascism emerged in the Soviet Union in 1933. Stalin believed that fascism was after all merely a variety of capitalism. Addressing the 17th Party Congress, he said there were no reasons why Soviet-German relations should deteriorate.

Nikolai Bukharin believed that although fascism had its origins in capitalism the two could not be identified. He said that the ideology of fascism must be treated very seriously, and was convinced that nazism cast a dark shadow on the whole world as soon as it emerged. Nikolai Bukharin was one of those who immediately recognized the monstrous threat posed by nazi Germany. He realized the full implications of "Mein Kampf," in which Hitler was not very discreet and said bluntly that the Slavs are enemies of Germany and that Germany would march on the East. Bukharin realized that there were serious political conclusions to be drawn from the book.

Question. Why did Bukharin plead guilty at the 1938 trial?

S.C. If one is to read attentively the verbatim report of the trial record, it becomes clear that although Bukharin formally owned up to the charges brought against him, as he was forced to do so to save his family, he in fact denied having committed any of the crimes that Vyshinsky and Stalin accused him of. As you read his testimony and his final statement at the trial you realize that he was not just defending himself. He was accusing those who accused him. In short, his tactic was to accept political responsibility for anything under the sun, thereby driving it home that his was a symbolic part, and at the same time deny emphatically his involvement in any specific crime in order to lay bare the true political meaning of the charges brought against him. He was pronounced guilty at the trial, but as he spoke from the dock Bukharin was addressing a higher court. He was speaking to the court of history, addressing himself to the judgement of generations to come. He told his judges that world history will pass its verdict - and nothing else matters.

Question. What was the attitude of sovietologists to the 20th CPSU Congress and the report made by Nikita Khrushchev?

S.C. My whole generation was greatly impressed by what Nikita Khrushchev and his associates did. His policies convinced us that change is possible in the Soviet Union. Before that, sovietology proceeded from Stalinism. It is often the case now that the older generation of sovietologists believes that Stalin never died, while the new generation believes that Stalin never lived.

Question. Is the work of sovietologists influenced by what is written about this country by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in particular?

S.C. Some sovietologists accepted all he had to say, especially at the beginning, when he moved to the West; others did not. I don't think he exerted any special influence on them. We have all naturally read his novels, especially his early ones, but I, for one, simply cannot bring myself to read what he has written recently.

N.T. New Times has three questions to ask. When did sovietology emerge? What was its part in the cold war? What is its influence on U.S. attitudes toward the Soviet Union?

S.C. Your questions concern the relationship between sovietology and policy making in the United States. Yes, there has always been a close relationship between them. Sovietology emerged as a science in large measure at the beginning of the cold war and it can be said that in a sense it is its offspring. But there are different schools of sovietology. Some scholars also are active politicians. Others confine themselves to scholarship. Some believe in the need for the cold war and others believe in the need to ease tensions. I doubt if sovietologists or the academic community as a whole exert any telling influence on politics.

In his book "Rethinking the Soviet Experience; Politics and History since 1917," Dr Cohen gives a somewhat different answer to a similar question. In the book he says that few academic disciplines are as closely incorporated into American political and intellectual life as sovietology. The Soviet Union, he goes on to say, plays a disproportionate part in United States' domestic and foreign policy. Sovietology as a science is constantly influenced by international events, from the cold war to détente. It "trains" advisers to U.S. presidents and officials and diplomats for the State Department, Dr Cohen says in his book.

This account of the three-hour meeting between Dr Cohen and the students at the Moscow Institute of History and Archives does not of course cover all that was said there. Some of the points made by Dr Cohen were accepted, others disputed. His audience listened to him with great interest and there was clearly a desire on both sides to understand each other better.

In the lobby after the meeting I heard someone say that every historical event can be interpreted in one way only, because there is only one truth and the rest is no more than aberration. There can be no doubt that there is indeed only one truth, but there are many ways of arriving at it. Most of those I spoke to after the meeting agreed that truly scientific vision is impossible without clashes of opinion and different views on the same facts.

Boris BALKAREY

TAKING THE TIGER BY THE TAIL

From our special correspondent
SERGEI GOLYAKOV

If you do not want to miss the morning exercise hour in Chinese cities you must be an early riser. Every morning, in parks, gardens, school yards, on river embankments, and simply on the pavement you will see people of all ages engrossed in doing their daily dozens: bending, turning, jumping, jogging. In a small park which usually serves as a lovers' retreat after dark a group of girls in varicoloured sports outfits swing dummy swords in imitation of some ancient dance. In a neighbouring garden elderly people, watching their breathing and gazing into the distance, freeze into the successive poses of the taijichuan gymnastics.

With a six-day working week and no holidays for practically the majority of factory and office workers, the morning exercises are an absolute necessity. After fifteen minutes or half an hour in the fresh air, people return to their homes to merge soon after with the throngs of citizens hurrying to their workplaces. The new economic system teaches people to value time. Being late for work and letting the machines stand idle hits hard at the pocket book. "Time is money and efficiency is life," I read on a plywood signboard in the yard of a Peking automobile plant.

The end and the means

"We all have to live according to a tight schedule now. We have to get started without wasting any time. Too much of it was wasted in the past," Lu Yonghua, Deputy Division Chief of the State Commission for Restructuring the Economic Systems under the State Council of the P.R.C., said with a sigh.

His emphasis on the drive for efficiency was clearly not idle talk. Lu has been with the commission only two and a half years. But it seemed to me there was not a question that could take him unawares, not a figure he could not cite from memory without referring to a notebook.

His task at the moment was to give a Soviet journalist a general idea of the changes taking place in China, to acquaint him with the main guidelines of the economic reform under way. His sigh of regret at the wasted time was a prelude to what he had to tell me. Had there been no leftist excesses in the past, no skipping of stages, no "great leap forward" or "cultural revolution," the building of socialism in China could have advanced far ahead.

"After all, we made considerable progress in the first years after the revolution," Lu said. "There was the agrarian reform and the promotion of cooperative farming in the countryside, and socialist changes in industry and trade in the cities. But later things came to a standstill. For twenty years - until December 1978 - the country marked time. The productive forces did not develop. The emphasis was placed on 'the class struggle' and no serious thought was given to the development of industry and satisfying the material needs of the people."

In December 1978, at the 3rd plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, advocates of major social and economic changes came into the leadership. The emphasis was shifted to socialist modernization. The country's pulse quickened at last.

"The plenary meeting formulated the basic objectives of China up to the end of the present century: to increase the national product fourfold in the next twenty years and, on this basis, to ensure the population average living standard," Lu said.

Acceleration of the economic growth rate through sweeping structural reform became the means to the attainment of this far-reaching objective. The reforms are comprehensive, involving the recasting of the economic system, the political structure and foreign relations, and corresponding changes in all other spheres. The initial plans for a 6.5 per cent annual increase in production seemed unrealistic even to the experts. However, in the past five years this figure has been practically doubled.

The first test

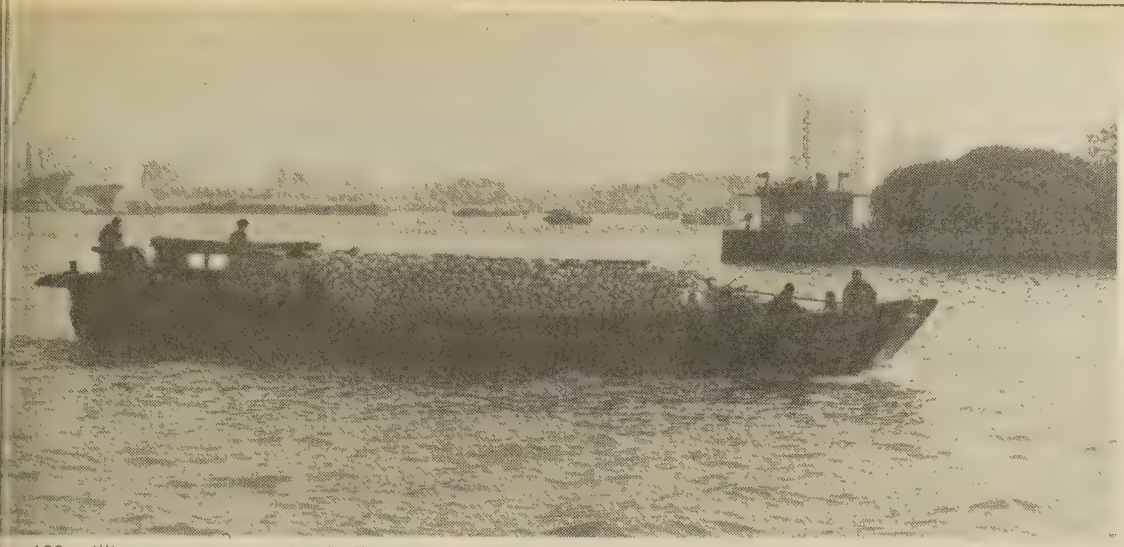
The reform policy was put to the test first in the countryside, which accounts for 80 per cent of China's population. Without stability in the countryside there can be no stability of the political system as a whole, the Chinese leadership holds. The strategic concept underlying the rural reform was to untie the hands of the peasants, give them the right to independent initiative, enable them to display their traditional enterprise and industriousness.

The restructuring of the countryside was pivoted on the working peasant family. Throughout the long history of China the family has always been regarded as the basic unit of society. It is to the credit of the architects of the reform that they combined the "family approach" with the principles of socialism. The peasant family is seen as an independent working collective with its own specific laws and hence gravitating toward cooperative relationships. Experience has fully demonstrated the correctness of this approach.

The previous system of people's communes gave the peasant no opportunity to display any initiative. "Communization" led to the establishment in the villages of giant cooperatives in which production relations came into glaring conflict with the development of the productive forces based on the preponderance of manual labour. Literally everything was socialized, from garden allotments to household necessities. The idea of "eating from the common pot" may have been attractive at the face of it. In practice, however, everything turned out quite differently. Giant hogs as big as elephants, luscious peaches the size of a plate, carps resembling dolphins leaping from the water right onto the frying pan - all this existed only on posters. In reality incredible poverty, shortages of food, and clothing, lack of housing and other hardships remained the lot of the majority of peasants. For many years the countryside was the milch cow that provided the resources needed for the development of industry. Crop yields were not enough to meet the basic food needs of the population. The peasant was cut off from the market and the consumer. Whatever he produced was bought up by the state at prices that did not cover the cost of production. There was no incentive whatever to raise productivity and increase the quantity of marketable produce.

The reform brought four innovations to the countryside. The first related to the land. While belonging as before to the communes, it was leased out in equal allotments to the peasant families. Some

Continued. For beginning see Nos. 3, 4, 1988.



Vegetable supplies to the market never run dry.

180 million peasants received allotments of approximately the same size and value on a 15-year lease. Since the per capita arable land in the P.R.C. amounts to one tenth of a hectare, the allotments were small. Nevertheless they made it possible to increase the output of marketable produce. Thus the transition to the family contract was effected.

The second innovation was the contract system. Prior to 1984 the peasants turned in part of their crop to the state at a fixed price. Now they conclude relevant contracts with purchasing organizations. After his contract commitments have been fulfilled, the peasant has the right to sell part of the surplus on the open market.

The third was the increase of the state purchasing prices. Between 1980 and 1985 purchasing prices for farm produce in general rose by 54 per cent and for grain, nearly doubled. This stimulated the sale of produce to the state, although the percentage of farm output sold on the market is steadily increasing. With the peasants themselves deciding what to plant and where and what crop was most advantageous in the given locality, their incomes began to grow within a couple of years.

Liu Shiyun, Party Committee Secretary of Jinghai District.

The family contract, the contract system in general, and the higher state purchasing prices breathed new life into agriculture. Take, for instance, the Jinghai region which I visited. Liu Ruifen, Deputy Head of the Administrative Office, Jinghai people's government, told me that in the recent past this district was notorious for its poverty and backwardness. The peasants were plagued by constant floods and droughts. The fields were pest-ridden. The poverty-stricken life of the inhabitants gave a poet grounds for describing the place as "a land eternally watered by tears," a land where people ate vegetables for breakfast, bran for dinner and watery soup flavoured with moonbeams for supper.

How are things there now? Between 1979 and 1986 farm produce here increased more than six times over. Besides the basic crops - maize, wheat and beans - the local peasants began growing vegetables and fruit, breeding fish, raising cattle and setting up poultry farms.

Their higher incomes enabled the peasants to start clearing river channels, building irrigation systems and reservoirs. If formerly a wristwatch or a sewing machine was the most the peasant could dream of acquiring, now television sets, tape recorders and urban-type furniture have appeared in many homes.

This picture is typical of the country as a whole. In the nine years beginning with 1978 the average increase in farm production ranged from 4 per cent (for grain crops) to more than 15 per cent (cotton). In 1984 the P.R.C. brought in a record high grain harvest - 407.3 million tons, or over 100 million tons more than in 1978. The increase in peasant incomes in the nine years was greater than in the preceding 30 years (on the average from 134 yuans in 1978 to 424 yuans in 1986). Whereas in 1978 some 200 million peasants lived below the poverty line, today no more than 40 million fall into this bracket. And in another five years this category is expected to disappear altogether.

The cities too have benefited by the agrarian reform. Formerly the city dweller was issued ration cards for 42 prime necessities, today only rice and vegetable oil are rationed. These and several other products are sold at less than the purchasing price and the difference is covered by state subsidies. In 1984 these subsidies ran to 17 billion yuans (a yuan equals 16 kopecks). But the government shoulders this expense item in order to guarantee that the basic foodstuffs are within reach of the population. State prices for meat, rice, wheat and soy beans are about half the market prices.

Unexpected phenomenon

The reform in the countryside not only stimulated agricultural production. "Quite unexpectedly for us," Deng Xiaoping recalled, "it above all gave a spur to the development of district and village industries. All of a sudden a diversified commodity production appeared, all manner of small enterprises of various types sprang up as if from nowhere."

The rapid development of rural industry was the fourth innovation that came to the countryside together with the reform.

Before the reform the peasants were not allowed to engage in any non-agricultural occupation. That was qualified of "taking the capitalist path." What the reform did was to put an end to this attitude. As a result, today 12 million district and village enterprises employing a labour force of 80 million operate in the countryside.

In 1986 they produced 354.1 billion yuans' worth of goods, or more than 30 per cent than in the preceding year. This amounted to roughly one fifth of the country's total industrial output. And the pace continues to increase. In late December the Renmin ribao reported that the gross output of these enterprises in 1987 was expected to reach 450 billion yuans and to exceed, for the first time, the volume of agricultural production.

The spontaneous development of rural industries made it possible to resolve an urgent problem by providing work for half of the redundant workers in the countryside and sharply reducing the migration of the rural population to the cities. Moreover vast material resources were saved in this way. For to create a single job in the city costs about 10,000 yuans. Multiply this by 80 billion and you get 800 billion. The state cannot afford such a huge financial outlay and never could. Nor was it needed. The creation of rural industry did not cost the state treasury a single yuan. It rose on its own yeast, so to say, demonstrating the inexhaustible potential of popular initiative.

What do the rural enterprises produce? Everything and anything.

Liu Shiyun, secretary of the Party committee in the Jinghai region, told me with pride that the Chinese world table tennis champion uses a racquet made in one of the local village enterprises. And there are some 2,000 such enterprises in the region. They employ seven out of every ten villagers. They produce clothing, building materials, furniture, electrodes for welding equipment, bamboo curtains, rubber footwear, pickles, prints, cold drinks, wattle baskets and all kinds of other things. Last year 180 million yuans worth of such products were exported.

True, this region is situated in the immediate vicinity of Tianjin, the country's second biggest industrial centre. This makes it much easier to resolve problems of equipment, raw materials, and the sale of the finished product. Many local enterprises practically live on orders obtained in the city. However, rural industries farther away from industrial centres are also doing well. "People are breaking away from the soil but not from the village," economists from the P.R.C. Academy of Social Sciences told me. This is one of the distinctive features of industrialization in China.

Warning signal

Needless to say, it is not all smooth sailing at the rural enterprises. Working methods are still primitive. The equipment even more so. The rising prices of raw materials and the backward technology increase the cost of production. The enterprises suffer from a lack of qualified managers and a shortage of skilled personnel.

Specialists believe that in the future rural industries should employ another 120 million people at least. However, to create so many new jobs substantial investments will be needed. At an all-China conference held in late December in Peking it was noted that the district and village enterprises would have to reorient on science and technology, on higher quality of output, economic efficiency and on producing for export.

The countryside is also faced with problems directly connected with agricultural production. Quite obviously the production potential of the small peasant allotments will soon be exhausted. As they expand output for the market, the family farms are beginning to feel increasing need for machinery, credits and advanced technology. The logics itself calls for large-scale production, the establishment of farm equipment and marketing cooperatives, specialized, land reclamation, feed and other such associations. As a matter of fact, individual producers are already pooling their resources, moreover on a purely voluntary basis. In some cases this takes the form of joining land allotments. In others, pools of agricultural machines are set up on the collective principle. Associations of feed producers, poultry raisers or fish breeders are appearing. Production and processing enterprises are set up on the same principle. More than 280,000 of these are already operating.

A disquieting problem is the differentiation of incomes in the countryside, the friction between the new rich and their less fortunate fellow villagers. At the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of China delegates from Jiangsu Province, which holds first place in China for gross industrial and agricultural production, said that even in their prosperous region there still were some households with an annual per capita income of less than 200 yuans. The proponents of the reform, however, maintain that there is nothing wrong with some farmers having bigger incomes than most; let these be an example to the rest, they say. Be that as it may, the envy and the frowns to be observed by villagers are an indication of the existence of a certain social tension in the countryside.

The main problem is the slowing down of the production growth rate of some of the most important types of farm produce. After the record harvest of 1984, the grain crop has shown a tendency to decline. In a number of provinces the area under cotton is shrinking. It costs the peasant 1,350 yuans to grow a hectare of cotton and the return is no more than 3,000 yuans. This profit rate does not satisfy everyone. In the conditions of the free market and abolition of price controls the peasant is tempted to try growing more profitable crops.

To stimulate grain production the state rewards the producer, so to say, by selling him six kilogrammes of mineral fertilizer and three litres of diesel fuel at fixed prices for every 100 kilogrammes of grain he delivers under contract. The same purpose is served by granting the peasants interest-free credits and paying for deliveries in advance.

Dropping into a small eating place for a snack one day in late November, I noticed unusual animation among the customers. Judging by the grave shaking of heads, they were discussing what was evidently some unpleasant news. What had happened? It turned out that it had just been announced that pork was to be rationed in China's three biggest cities - Peking, Shanghai and Tianjin. The monthly ration would be one and a quarter kilogrammes per person at a fixed price and anything above that would have to be bought at higher, commercial prices. This was a warning signal. Commenting on it, the Peking China Daily wrote in an editorial: "Rationing appears to take the opposite direction from the current economic reforms which employ market forces to replace much of the administrative interference in the economy. It reminds people of the rationing system during the 1960s and the 'cultural revolution.'"

True, the paper went on to assure its readers that so far there were no grounds for such a gloomy view. On the whole things are not so bad. Since the beginning of the reform annual per capita consumption of pork, which the Chinese prefer to any other kind of meat, has

A country road.

doubled - from 7.7 to 14.4 kilogrammes. And whereas formerly pork could be bought only on ration cards, now you can buy as much as you want at the market, though for a higher price. At the same time, the paper admitted, pork production in 1987 dropped by 2.6 per cent. Why?

Experts believe the decline is due to the higher feed prices at the local market where the state price control system no longer operates. The high price of feed makes it unprofitable for the peasant to raise livestock. A plausible explanation on the face of it. But only on the face of it. Closer scrutiny reveals many of the sore spots in the agricultural sector: the standstill in grain production growth, imperfections in the price mechanism, the imbalance between the growth of the income of the population and the supply of goods, the low level of farming methods, and a number of other factors which the Chinese economists are wrestling with today.

The village and the town

There still are a great many knots to be unravelled. But this should not obscure the most important thing: by giving free rein to the people's initiative and enterprise, the rural reform has turned out to be a real "Chinese miracle." It has not only transformed the countryside and made it possible to feed and clothe a vast country with a huge population within a brief space of time. The notable results it has so quickly achieved have given an impulse to other important undertakings in the sphere of industrial production, planning, commodity circulation, capital construction, and the optimal restructuring of the entire national economy. "The success of the reform in the countryside," Deng Xiaoping said, "has given us more confidence, and we have begun to apply the experience gained there to the reform of the urban economic system."

The urban reform is all-embracing. It extends to all spheres of material and spiritual life. "Taking the tiger by the tail" is how it has been described.

I spent a whole evening with Cai Wenlong, chairman of the committee for the reform of the economic system of Tianjin, who told me of the changes that had taken place in his city since the restructuring began.

Twelve years ago in the previous "year of the dragon," the mythical monster had not been kind to Tianjin. In the summer of 1976 the city was hit by a severe earthquake which took a heavy toll of human life. Subterranean tremors damaged three quarters of the city's housing and industrial buildings. Many foreign countries offered their help to the victims. But this help was highhandedly declined by the Chinese leadership of the time. The sufferers had to help themselves. But how could they do that when total centralization prevailed and the state lacked the necessary resources. In these circumstances reanimation of the city could have taken many decades. The reform made it possible to extricate the city economy from the crisis in a few years. Today Tianjin has changed beyond recognition. New housing developments with parks, gardens and sport grounds have sprung up everywhere. Many shops, restaurants and hotels have been built. More than three million square metres of housing alone are built every year.

But all this is the visible side of the reform of the economic system, the palpable result of the operation of its

A monument to the Tianjin earthquake victims.

mechanism. The substance of that mechanism boils down to state regulation of the market and market orientation of the enterprises. In other words, the organic unity of planning and the market, in which planned regulation has nothing in common with regulation by directive. Planning by directive, it was stressed at the 13th Congress of the CPC, must gradually be replaced by contracts between the state and the enterprises, and between the enterprises themselves, based on the principles of equivalent exchange and the law of value. "The forms of direct management which laid the emphasis on planning by directive do not accord with the requirements of the development of socialist commodity economy," it was said at the congress.

At the heart of urban reform is the granting of more independence to the working collectives in the choice of means of improving the socialist economy, giving them more room for manoeuvre. Science, culture and education are called upon to serve the one deity - the development of the productive forces.

The new approach enables industrial enterprises to determine the range of their output (state planning applies only to 69 basic types of industrial output), choose their partners, dispose of part of the profits, set the prices of their own output and put it on the market. Directors have been given the right to hire and dismiss workes and office employees, and to regulate their wages. The leasing of small and medium enterprises to working collectives has been introduced and with notable success. The contract system has become the practice in industry.

The reform in the cities calls for a thorough modernization of marketing. This means going beyond local confines and creating nationwide markets for raw materials, machinery and other equipment, capital and manpower. The market is to become the chief regulator of the functioning of enterprises, the supreme arbiter of the social usefulness of production. This concept was tried out last year in 16 medium-sized cities and from the beginning of this year it has become the rule.

The urban reform is not expected to produce immediate results. It is believed that its effect will be felt five to seven and possibly even more years from now. However, some notable changes for the better are already to be observed. Gross industrial production in 1986 rose by more than 11 per cent as compared with the previous year, and workers' wages are increasing, though more slowly than the income of the peasants.

I was told that when in October 1984 the city reform was announced there was something like a panic in Peking and other cities. People rushed to the shops to buy up everything in sight, fearing from past experience that another "zigzag" or excess was about to occur. But the quantity of goods in the shops did not diminish, there were no interruptions in supplies and gradually the fears vanished and the passions subsided. On seeing that their future was not threatened, the people calmed down.

In the opinion of Professor Ni Zhengmao of the Shanghai Law Institute, the rapid elimination of the consequences of this minicrisis fortified people's faith in the reform still more, gave them confidence in the morrow. "Of course we are still very far from the ideal," the professor said. "But we have a clear idea of how to bring it nearer. There can be no return to the past. There is no reasonable alternative to the policy of reform. That policy alone can help us to catch up with the times."

A PLAN WHICH NEVER MATERIALIZED

Details of Operation Rankin

ALEXEI TITKOV

The autumn of 1942 was a trying period for the anti-nazi coalition. The Soviet army, exerting a tremendous effort, had checked the Wehrmacht's advance on the Volga and in the Caucasus. Fighting was continuing in Stalingrad. The British troops in North Africa, where Rommel's victorious advance had just been halted, were also in a difficult situation. The nazis still held Europe under their heel.

In September 1942, President Roosevelt's personal envoy Wendell Willkie flew into Moscow, where he was received by Stalin. After discussing issues common to the allies, Willkie unexpectedly asked Stalin what he thought about the likelihood of an internal explosion in Germany.

Stalin doubted if Germany could be defeated as a result of an internal explosion. He thought an internal explosion could only be triggered off by a heavy defeat of Germany on the frontline, i.e., by an external blow.

It is interesting that the view expressed by Willkie was current in the West. For instance, Winston Churchill wrote to Roosevelt at the time that **"widespread demoralization may set in among the Germans, and we must be ready to profit by any opportunity which offers."**

The U.S. President's reply was even more categorical. He believed it to be necessary, as early as active operations permitted,to concentrate shock forces in the United Kingdom that would be quickly used in the event of a German collapse.

It will be recalled that any opportunity was understood by Churchill, as he himself explained, as the possible "return" of allied troops to the European continent. Since the offensive in the Stalingrad area was only beginning, and Montgomery was still preparing his operation, the way Churchill and Roosevelt stated their intentions was strange. What was the matter?

A meeting that wasn't held

Cooperation between the three powers in the fight against the nazis suffered many vissicitudes. It is no secret that at the initial stage of the nazi invasion senior officials in the governments and general staffs of Britain and the United States were ready to accept the idea of a Soviet defeat. Even by the time of the Battle of Moscow, Churchill regarded the chances of the two sides as fifty-fifty. However, it was the Battle of Moscow that exploded the myth of the Wehrmacht's invincibility. Another crushing blow was dealt at the Wehrmacht near Stalingrad.

At the end of November 1942, when a victory at Stalingrad had become clearly apparent, Churchill suggested to Roosevelt that they meet Stalin. The allies seemed to forget that the situation on the Don and Caucasian fronts made it impossible for Stalin as supreme commander to go to North Africa, where the meeting was proposed. Moreover, it was not the opening of a second front that they intended to discuss. President Roosevelt wrote to Stalin on December 8: **"There are many matters of vital importance to be discussed between us. These relate not only to vital strategic decision, but also to things we should talk over in a tentative way in regard to emergency policies which we should be ready with, if, and when, conditions in Germany permit."**

What kind of "emergency policies"? Why did they worry our partners so much that they asked Stalin to come urgently to North Africa? In his letter of December 14, Stalin explained to the allies that he could not leave the Soviet Union "in the immediate future, or even in early March." It was also clearly hinted that the Soviet government had no idea of what issues Churchill and Roosevelt proposed to discuss.

It is now known what preoccupied the Western leaders. The U.S. Secretary of

War Henry Stimson noted in his diary on December 18, 1942, that the best hope for the postwar world would be a peace settlement "based on the mutual relations of the two English-speaking nations." A memorandum released by the State Department in December 1942 stressed the need to expedite the planning and conduct of operations in Europe **"so that peace would not find the Soviet armies alone on the continent."**

Thus, highly-placed officials in Britain and the United States maintained a hostile attitude to their ally, now waging a mortal fight against nazi Germany. Washington and London spoke of the Soviet Union as an enemy rather than an ally. Here is the attitude taken by William Bullit, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. In his memorandum of January 29, 1943, he called on Roosevelt to pursue a harsh policy towards Moscow. He suggested that after the war "adequate force should stand behind the eastern frontier of Europe ready to resist the Red Army ' Such an extremist position was not approved by Roosevelt, but it exerted a certain influence on his stand.

Here is one farther instance to show how seriously Washington thought about the need for measures to be taken in the event of Germany's defeat. In May 1943, Roosevelt suggested to Stalin that they meet without Churchill. The President wrote to the Soviet leader:

"There are two sides to the problem. The first relates to timing. There is always the possibility that the historic Russian defence, followed by taking the offensive, may cause a crack-up in Germany next winter. In such a case we must be prepared for the many next steps."

This message reflected the White House's displeasure at the uncompromising stand taken by Anthony Eden on the colonies during his visit to Washington in March 1943, London's claim to the leading role in planning the conduct of the war and the postwar settlement in the world, and the United States' fear of remaining in the background if the war suddenly ended.

The Rankin plan

The Anglo-American Trident conference held in Washington from May 12 to 25, 1943, passed a resolution on the further elaboration of the plan for military operations in the event of a "premature" collapse of the Reich. This job was entrusted to General Morgan.

Following this conference, the British and U.S. chiefs of staff and Winston Churchill met in Algiers on May 29, 1943, to discuss the prospects of hostilities from the summer of 1943 to the spring of 1944. Churchill again stressed that, in addition to drawing up operations in Italy in 1943 and Operation Overlord in 1944, it was also necessary to have elaborate plans for the disembarkation of considerable forces across the Channel in the event of the German forces being seriously weakened.

The intelligence data were summed up by a subunit of the joint intelligence committee of the United States and Britain. On August 4, 1943, shortly before the Quebec conference, the committee presented a top secret report on prospects for development in Germany in the latter half of 1943. The report said in particular that if at any stage the authorities in control in Germany recognized that they no longer had sufficient forces to hold the fronts both in Russia and in Northern and Western Europe, **"they might abandon the latter, preferring the occupation of Germany by Anglo-American rather than by Russian forces."**

By the beginning of the Quebec conference, General Morgan had devised a plan based on the data made available by the joint intelligence committee (on the situation in Germany as well) and by an Anglo-American staff group. It provided for combined operations of the U.S. and British armed forces in the following contingencies: (A) if Germany was seriously weakened; (B) if the German troops withdrew from the occupied countries; (C) if Germany stopped organized resistance in Northwestern Europe.

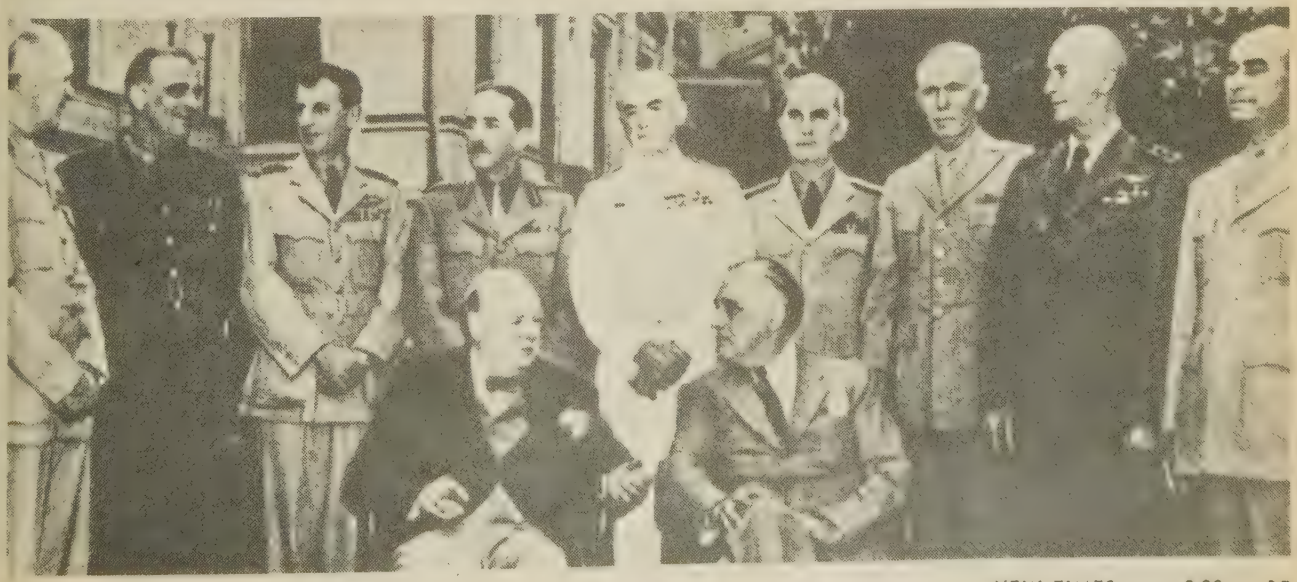
The plan was codenamed Rankin and, accordingly, its three components (Rankin A, Rankin B and Rankin C) were presented for discussion by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 20, 1943. The preamble said:

"Nor is it beyond the bounds of possibility that an imminent threat of complete disaster on the Russian front might induce him(the enemy - A.T.) **to abandon altogether the occupation of Western and probably Southern Europe, in order to concentrate all available forces against the Russian means, postpone the hour of final defeat and insure the ultimate occupation of Germany by Anglo-American rather than by Russian forces."**

Thus, the idea was that Germany, not the allies, should carry out some measures. But what sort of Germany?

Staking on whom?

The answer to this question was not clear for a long time. Was it supposed (without any grounds, however) that by dint of circumstances Germany would be



Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Trident Anglo-American conference in Washington. The White House, May 1943.

compelled to adopt a new course? Or was it expected that the nazi government would be replaced by something else?

The answer is known today. The August 20, 1943, memorandum of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services considered both possibilities: direct cooperation with nazi Germany, with the turning of all its forces against the Soviet Union, and the coming to power of a centrist-socialist government that would effectively be an ally of the West.

The first alternative was unlikely, the memorandum stressed. As for the second, the Office of Strategic Services led by William Donovan believed that it had some very real chances of success. Both London and Washington had been in contact with opposition groups in the German establishment since their inception in 1938. The Americans maintained these contacts through their European residency in Bern, headed by Allen Dulles, while the British preferred channels leading through Stockholm.

Not all archives and channels have yet been uncovered. For instance, the details of the political concept suggested by German conservatives to the United States through Donovan's channels (his Istanbul residency) were only made public in the late 1970s. They unequivocally envisaged the opening of a front in the west to ensure the Anglo-American occupation of all of Germany.

Istanbul was merely one of the places where both sides could meet for an exchange of information. In his book published in 1986, the American historian Henry Malone studied the contacts established through Adam von Trott, a prominent member of the anti-Hitler opposition and a Foreign Ministry official, who had considerable contacts in Britain, the United States and Sweden, with church dignitaries in particular.

One such dignitary, Dr Harry Johansson, director of the Nordic Oecumenical Institute, writes that, in the opinion of von Trott, "mutual understanding between the Western powers and a new regime" would **"help eliminate the risk of the Bolshevization of Central Europe."**

In his turn, von Trott wrote to Johansson in 1942 that members of the opposition "hold the common view uniting the whole of Christian Europe."

Both London and Washington knew of the plot to assassinate Hitler. Dulles was regularly informed about it by his agent 151 - Bernd Gisevius, a member of the staff of Abwehr head, Admiral Canaris. At a meeting with Swiss Foreign Ministry official Philippe Mottu in Stuttgart in June 1944, von Trott told him that the plot had reached the practical stage. Mottu received an American visa from Dulles and brought the information to Washington. Great interest in the affairs was shown by Vice-President Wallace (this hitherto unknown fact was disclosed to historian Malone by Mottu himself).

How the chances of the opposition were assessed in Britain and the United States is another matter. There is much evidence to show that both Churchill and the secret service MI-6 were highly sceptical. Opinions in Washington varied: while Donovan was prepared to give direct assistance to the putschists, the military leadership did not attach serious importance to the conspiracy.

However that may be, on May 23, 1944, that is, on the eve of D-day, all the top commanders of the expeditionary forces were briefed that **if the first weeks of the invasion showed that the allies could not be checked, the top German officers might decide on swift action against Hitler.**

But the attempt on Hitler's life did not bring political dividends to those who had expected that the preconditions would be created for the opening of the western front.

The maximum and the minimum

Let us return to 1943, when the Rankin plan was devised. As the U.S. and British leaders were conferring in Quebec, a giant battle was developing at Kursk. On July 14, the Soviet troops, having exhausted the enemy in defensive fighting, launched a counteroffensive and moved 100 kilometres westwards within three weeks. Operations for liberating the Ukraine east of the Dnieper began simultaneously with the complete routing of the Germans near Kursk. General Bradley, commander of the First U.S. Army, describes the Western allies' reaction to these events as follows:

"In London, allied officers speculated on the depths of this disintegration (of the German army - A.T.), **and not a few of them predicted that Germany might collapse as it had before in 1918."**

Therefore, Bradley goes on, the command of the expeditionary forces based in Britain thought it would be expedient to **"move on into Germany, disarm its troops, and seize control of the nation."**

The course of action stated by Omar Bradley in his memoirs can be called a maximum programme. As for President Roosevelt, he defined a more modest objective for the U.S. invasion force:

"The United States should take Northwest Germany. We can get our ships into such ports as Bremen and Hamburg, also Norway and Denmark, and we should go as far as Berlin. The Soviets could then take the territory to the east thereof. The United States should take Berlin."

No wonder that in November 1943, the First U.S. Army of General Bradley stationed in the British Isles was preoccupied not with preparations for Operation Overlord but with emergency planning envisaged under Operation Rankin C. General Barker of the Joint Chiefs of Staff cabled to General Morgan that Rankin C was becoming more and more probable.

Meanwhile, the real situation on the fronts called for other decisions. After long hesitation, Operation Overlord was finally given priority, and was launched on June 6, 1944.

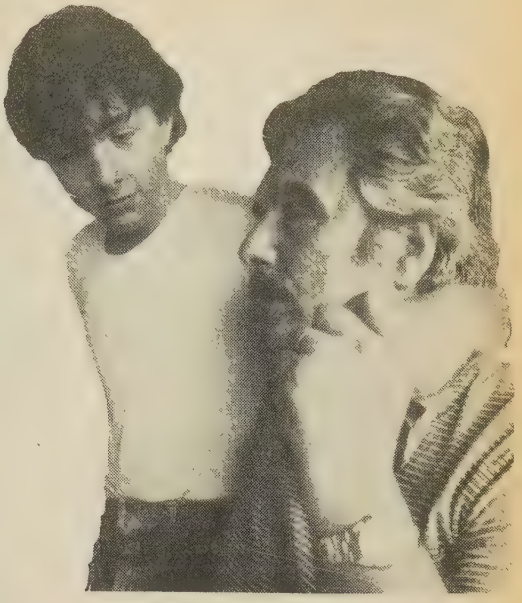
It is significant, however, that the Rankin plan was not forgotten afterwards. Moreover, the sphere of its operation was even extended. At a meeting on September 8, 1944, the U.S. and British Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to work out a Rankin plan for Austria and Greece.

In this way the plan of action in the event of a sudden German collapse developed into a military and political programme to end the war in Europe. The chief objective of the programme can be inferred from the verbatim report of the April 13, 1945 meeting of the U.S. and British Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the exchange of letters between President Eisenhower's political adviser Robert Murphy and the State Department. The Anglo-American forces were to seize the largest possible area of the territory of Austria and Germany and retain it despite the existing agreements on the division of the occupation zones, thereby securing an improved bargaining position for the West. But this plan, inimical to the idea of four-power cooperation, could not be implemented.

It is useful to recall not only those military and political plans that were put into effect. Plans that remained in safes are sometimes no less revealing. The Rankin plan is one of them, because it weighed heavily on the allies during the war, preventing them from making a bigger contribution to the routing of the common enemy. The very basis of the plan was invidious. It was founded on distrust of the Soviet Union, which was fighting hard for its existence. It was, of course, tempting to speak of the possible collapse of Germany and work out contingency plans. But could this talk bring victory nearer?

Experience taught the authors of similar notions a hard lesson. The leaders of the United States and Britain were forced to give up their wait-and-see tactics and take the path of active cooperation in the anti-nazi coalition. Only such cooperation could and did bring victory. This important lesson has not lost its relevance. ■

THE MUCCIOLI AFFAIR



A communal treatment for drug addiction arouses controversy

CECILIA KIN

As more and more people are lapsing into a spiritual vacuum in Italy, drug addiction assumes monstrous proportions there. I pick up a newspaper cutting at random from a pile on my desk. It says that in the city of Alessandria a schoolteacher, Francesca Conti by name, shot her only son - Elio Pronzato, 23 - dead. The mother had struggled for a decade to save him from "slavish addiction to drugs." After endless hesitations and delays, Elio had finally agreed to go to a narcological clinic. Then he suddenly changed his mind and said he was off to Milan for a batch of drugs which he would resell at a profit so as to be able to afford a larger daily intake. His mother reacted by pulling the trigger.

A lost generation

"I don't know why I did it," Francesca told the court. "It feels too terrible when you can do nothing to help your son." She was sentenced to five years of house arrest, i.e., actually left at large. The judge's lenience was motivated by the fact that she had to look after her son's 18-month-old daughter by a girl called Nicoletta. I couldn't help wondering where the child's mother was. Later I mentioned the drama in passing to a girl student who had come to see me. Nadia Caprioglio happened to know Elio, and his father, a philosophy instructor at Nadia's school. She told me Elio had been a lovely boy but totally lacking in character, and that Nicoletta was "on the needle" too. Such faimly tragedies abound. Sometimes parents even buy their children drugs in the hope of retaining at least marginal control over them.

Drug addiction and brutality go together. On April 20, 1985, Cristina Capuano, 60, jumped to her death out of a window in Grumo Nevano, a Naples suburb with a population of a mere 25,000. Branded "a mother of drug addicts," she had five of them in her family. Grumo Nevano is a centre of drug trafficking. According to police statistics, 70 per cent of its younger residents aged from 16 to 20 are on drugs. Several mysterious, and not so mysterious, deaths have occurred there over the past few years. Newspapers wrote a lot about poor Cristina after her death, and I asked myself what had become of the touching Italian common-folk solidarity we used to admire in neo-realistic movies. After all, none of Cristina's neighbours took pity on her.

Ermanno Corsi of the weekly Europeo interviewed the local priest and three successive Grumo syndics. All of them admitted defeat. "An entire generation is lost, an entire generation of young people is being slowly devoured by the monster of heroine." These young people are unattached to their families, totally amoral and uncivilized. Most of them live off their parents. Asked about murders and suicides in Grumo, the interviewees dismissed the questions with phrases like: "No idea" or "There's no proof of that".... They shied away from the subject as if sworn to silence, mafia-style.

"Mothers' rebellion"

In May 1985 horrible news came from Naples proper: four young men had died there in the space of 12 hours from "inferior-quality heroine." All of them had been both drug victims and drug pushers. According to the Ministry of the Interior, there is an organization dealing exclusively in drugs, its hierarchy topped by men from the underworld, from the camorra, and its "rank and file" being otherwise perfectly harmless old-age pensioners and housewives. These "rank and file," scattered all over Italy, total about 50,000. They have the patronage of notorious gangsters and are often covered up for by corrupt policemen. "Big-time" traffickers prefer to use "greenhorns" as agents. Any means - from bribery to blackmail - are resorted to coerce the agents to obedience, and the more capable ones are bought and resold at high "prices." "Treachery" is punished by death. Drug addiction, one of Italy's gravest social problems, is alleged to have an ideology and aesthetic of its own. The state is combating it but often suffers defeat. At the end of 1986, however, there was a glimmer of hope that drug figures would fall slightly.

Corrado Stajano, whose opinions carry great weight with me, visited a so-called "camorra zone" near Naples and compiled an interesting dossier entitled "Document."

I shall confine myself to just one example. In Torre Annunziata - a small town with a population of 60,000 and over 10,000 jobless made redundant by a local industrial slump and massive factory closures - "murders are committed almost

every Sunday, mostly at the fish market and in the streets adjacent to the church of the Madonna della Neve."

The above-mentioned events in Naples came as a shock. During the funeral of the four boys killed by "inferior-quality heroine," a "mothers' rebellion" broke out. It happened in the Spanish Quarter, the "belly of Naples." Until a few years ago, there used to be a black market in cigarettes and canned goods in that part of Naples, but in the end drugs ousted everything else. Thousands came for the funeral, and the women formed a committee; they shouted that they did not want to share the fate of "poor Cristina." Received by the President of the Republic, they demanded that the state step up its anti-drug action.

In Pordenone, Benito Sarto, 53, and his wife Assunta, 48, leaped out of a seventh-floor window, locked in each other's arms. Gianni, one of their four grown-up children, was an inveterate drug addict. They left a brief note asking the children to forgive them for the suicide - they "couldn't stand it any longer." Much was written about the incident. The Turin paper Stampa Sera gave over a whole page to the double suicide.Secular monk Nazareno Fabbretti, a leading Catholic journalist, wrote about the wretched Sartos and about drugs in general. "Cosa Nostra and related organizations," he wrote, "got together in New York in 1974 and stated that Italy hadn't yet been drawn into the drug traffic, for all its promise as a market. So they decided to act at once, leaving no stone unturned to conquer this market. As we see, it has taken them just over a decade to achieve their end."

A "cooperative" in San Patrignano

In the winter of 1984-85, the country was shaken by the "Muccioli affair," which merits dwelling upon in some detail. It started back in 1977-78, when Cosa Nostra was probably already engaged in vigorous action. Vincenzo Muccioli was then about fifty. A wealthy and athletic man, he outwardly resembled a Fellini character. In Rimini where he lived Muccioli could see teenage heroine addicts growing in number before his very eyes. Sometimes they swayed and "collapsed with glazed eyes while people passed indifferently by." Muccioli decided to dedicate himself for the rest of his life to combating drug addiction. The Mucciolis sold their hotel and moved to San Patrignano near Rimini, where they owned plots of land. He established a commune there and called it a farming cooperative.

Far from being a doctor, Muccioli has no education at all apart from elementary schooling. He doesn't read, cares nothing for art, and even shows off his folksiness a little. But for all that he is a magnanimous and benevolent person, and no one in Italy, his sworn enemies included, doubts his perfect disinterestedness. He must be a fanatic. Not being a doctor, he had no legal right to start an institution of the kind he was going to run, but Muccioli defied any laws and any complications that might ensue.

Muccioli's commune was open to all, including youngsters who had had brushes with police, VD victims and sexual perverts. Those were the youths and girls for whose fates he assumed responsibility. Before admitting a teenager (or even a mere child, as the case might be) to his commune, Muccioli made it clear, in no uncertain terms, that there was no getting away until a complete cure had been effected. "We'll use force if we have to," he warned bluntly.

The inmates of the commune had to follow a strict regime: alcohol and coffee were taboo, and smokers were allowed ten cigarettes a day. No parcels except shoes and clothes, and no money. The "patients" did hard physical work from morning till night, building a canteen, a cattle shed, a barn, a stable, and tilling the land. Vincenzo Muccioli developed his own system and, empirically, his own method of treatment. He is convinced that every drug addict without exception reaches a crisis - the itch to run away. There was no fence to keep them in, but in such periods (which, in Muccioli's opinion, lasted three, four or five days) he considered it permissible, necessary even, to use force. Then the crisis passed. Muccioli had the financial support of several philanthropists who preferred not to reveal their names. A group of doctors paid regular, free - and discreet - visits to the commune. Muccioli's young assistants, former addicts cured of the habit, had absolute faith in the Muccioli system, and did selfless work. Many of them combined work with study, some went to Urbino and Bologna Universities, with all the expenses involved met by the commune.

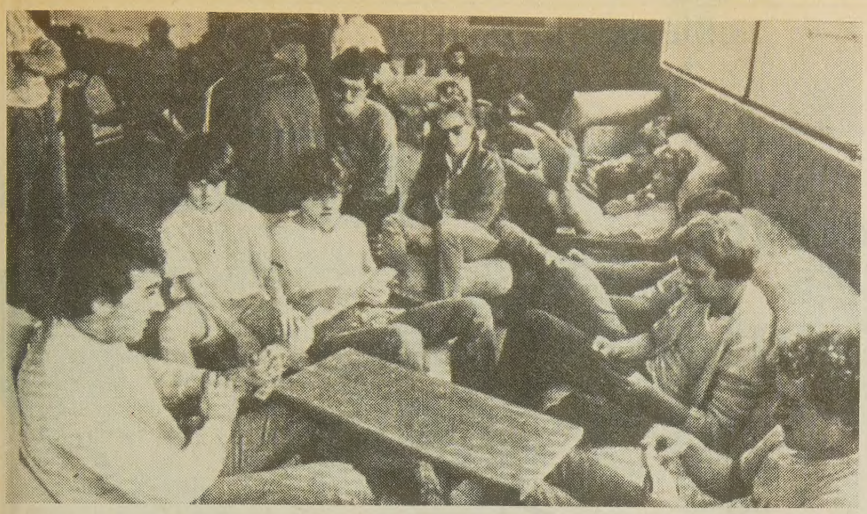
The Rimini clergy looked upon Muccioli's activity with mistrust, if not open hostility, from the start. The Church sometimes encourages private initiative, provided everything is done under its control. Muccioli wasn't religious. "Jesus was a great philosopher and an extremely wise man, but not God," he said in an interview. The Curia's paper Il Ponte accused Muccioli of having practised spiritualism, imagining himself to be a new Francis of Assisi or even a new Christ. Muccioli had probably riled the Church with his ruthlessness and confidence.

The trial

In 1980, a girl fugitive from the commune (talked into running away by her drug-pushing lover, as it later turned out) told the police that in the commune several boys were chained to their beds. A surprise inspection confirmed this. Muccioli was arrested, and the boys were freed. One of them was run over by a train under mysterious circumstances, others took to heroine again, and still others returned to the commune. A few months later Muccioli was released, and the chains confiscated as material evidence. He didn't buy new ones, but was as ready with slaps as ever. The commune continued to grow and strengthen, paying its way almost 100 per cent, while some of the members completed university courses, got married, and came back to the commune to help run it.

In Italy, a legal hearing often drags on

Scenes from the Muccioli community life. Photos from the magazine Panorama (Italy)



for months. The trial of Muccioli and his assistants began in November 1984. Muccioli bore himself very confidently in court, denied nothing, bragged a little, told the truth, and insisted that he was right. Everything was shown on television, of course, the chains included. The papers started screaming about inquisition. "At the time of crisis," he reiterated, "each addict is in full possession of his mental faculties, but he has no willpower at all and cannot act reasonably. If you fail to hold him at this critical moment, he will go on the needle again and may die, as many have, and all of you know that."

Then came a turning point when parents of San Patrignano kids interceded for Muccioli in court. The mother of one boy said she was ready to "kiss the chains" thanks to which her son had survived. A popular actor said his son had been admitted to three state narcological clinics in succession, but all the intensive threatment they offered had come to nothing because hospital attendants "sold the boys drugs every night." He extended heart-felt thanks to Muccioli for having saved his son, who had got a University degree, married and gone to work at the San Patrignano commune. The court was also addressed by the father of the boy who had been killed by the train after being "unchained" and making his getaway. Tragically, the man didn't know himself whether Muccioli was to be condemned or acquitted. He only said that Muccioli had always been so kind to his only son, and that it had been a rude awakening to learn about the chains and, finally, of the boy's absurd death.

It was then that Montanelli, the well-known journalist, wrote a strongly-worded article levelling sharp criticism against the Rimini Curia (Bishop Donatelli in particular) and judge Gino Righi, chairman of the Rimini court, and accusing the latter and his two colleagues of bias. Montanelli wrote that he would consider it an honour to be in the dock next to Muccioli. The article caused a new sensation. Telegrams started pouring in from thousands of Muccioli sympathizers. MPs, lawyers and even some high-ranking clergymen visited the commune. They found it "prosperous and boundlessly dedicated to Muccioli." Several leading sociologists and psychologists, Communists included, came out in support of Muccioli.

Muccioli was given a twenty-month suspended sentence. The court of cassation endorsed the verdict and found him guilty on all counts. Nevertheless, it is to San Patrignano that many judges send inveterate young drug addicts as a last resort.

Does the commune really offer such addicts hope, I asked my Italian friends. "Oh, that's a very long story," Mariolina Doria wrote to me. "When I lived in Milan, I spent two weekends in San Patrignano in order to take a closer look at the commune. An acquaintance of mine has been and remains one of its biggest benefactors. I can tell you one thing: it certainly does good and helps youngsters out, but I didn't care for Muccioli himself at all: he has a defiantly male chauvinist manner repulsive to woman. He looks quite convinced that he is Jesus Christ here, and he never has any doubts. I hope I'm mistaken, though, but this is how he struck me in 1981."

Another letter - two letters, to be exact - came from writer Marina Jarre. "I'm now working on a book based on the diary of a young worker who lived in Rivoli near Turin. He kept the diary for five years before dying of drugs at the age of 23. I am eager to make this diary into a book about his everyday life, his joys and sorrows, and I hope to find a publisher for it. Two weeks ago I met his mother whom my son Paolo, a doctor, treats in Rivoli. She hopes the book will provide the money to buy a gravestone. Italians are very serious about such things. I told her that the book would be the best monument in itself, and I saw that she understood me. She spends most of her time in ritual places that remind her of her son. It's amazing how easily she communicates with others and how she keeps the memory of the wretched boy alive."

I wrote to her at once requesting her permission to quote the letter and asking her opinion of the San Patrignano trial. "I have almost finished my book and written a preface to Daniele's diary," she replied. "The book is supplemented with brief commentaries. I tried to keep my own remarks to the minimum and give most of the space to his own words. In conclusion, I quoted some posthumous newspaper reports, and explained in just three lines how the diary had come my way. I think one should show restraint in the face of his life - any life. We never know everything about others, about their inner selves and the external factors that make them act in a certain way. Now that everything becomes news and public knowledge, we must learn again to have religious reverence for other people's souls. As for Muccioli, he is a specifically Italian phenomenon. If my own son were in danger, and if Muccioli saved him (as he has saved so many), I wouldn't probably object to the boy being tied up and treated under compulsion. I realize, however, that a real solution to the drug problem lies in waking each individual to his sense of human dignity without recourse to compulsion. Be that as it may, something is already being done about drug addiction. Nothing is being done, however, to prevent the illness. This is an enormous problem which depends on a multitude of factors and calls for intense concerted effort. So far it is hard not only to deal with, but even to grasp."

* * *

In Moscow, I told the San Patrignano story to my friends - physiologists, psychologists and sociologists among them. All of them without exception admired the courage of Vincenzo Muccioli and approved of him, although some experts remarked that, from the strictly legal point of view, the court could not but have condemned him for shouldering such an enormous responsibility without the benefit of a medical education. An authoritative Italian psychologist has written that the San Patrignano saga was "the only successful experiment of its kind in Western Europe." This story has a happy ending: the San Patrignano Foundation was established in September 1986. Now the state cooperates with the commune, and the Vatican has sent it its blessing. Muccioli's wife and two adult sons have publicly waived their right to all the property and land, which Muccioli has given to the commune.

■

Arnold Schwarzenegger as a Soviet militiaman

Almost 6 foot tall, he tips the scales at 210 pounds and has biceps 60 cm thick. Author of several books on body-building, married to Robert Kennedy's niece, and superhero of American thrillers, his very appearance on the screen creates a sensation. He has played the part of the prehistoric Conan the Destroyer, a Terminator cyber from the 21st century, and an ex-paratrooper who frees his daughter from a group of heavily armed gangsters. He is now here in Moscow.

Our encounter was unexpected. In the foyer of the Hotel Sovietskaya we saw two giants: Yuri Vlasov of the Soviet Union and Arnold Schwarzenegger of the U.S.A. Since boyhood, it seemed, Arnold had wanted to meet his idol face to face.

The first time he had seen Yuri, he said, was at the World Championship in Austria in 1961, when only 14. A body-builder and weight-lifter friend had taken him backstage, and that was when Arnold had decided to model himself on Vlasov. He said he had revised his daily regime, and had stuck to a daily four or five hours of weightlifting.

We next asked Yuri Vlasov what he thought of Schwarzenegger as an actor.

"In the movies," Yuri Vlasov said, "he displays all his physical properties - his muscular prowess, agility and tremendous strength. He is good in parts specially written for him. It was nice to hear what he had to say about me, although all this time I had not the slightest notion that I had been indirectly responsible for his career. Of course, I remember the 1961 championship well, but as for the crowd milling around, well, can you imagine what a world championship is like? You feel you're on fire and don't remember a thing."

We told Arnold Schwarzenegger that we knew he was filming in Moscow. He said this was his fourteenth picture, and was to be called "Red Heat." It will be full of adventures and stunts, and he plays the lead role as Ivan Danko, a Soviet militia captain, who manages to track down drug traffickers. However, the two ringleaders manage to escape to America after the band is wiped out, and Danko lands in Chicago where, with an American policeman, who provides a comic foil, they close the entire affair. Schwarzenegger observed that the plot is largely symbolic of the present day, with a Soviet militiaman and an American cop combating crime together. It is important for him to have U.S. movie audiences like the character he is playing. In Moscow, he added, they are shooting several episodes on location, mostly concerned with Danko's return home which, he believes, will give the film greater authenticity.

He also noted that as far as he knew, this was one of the first U.S. film units to have the opportunity of shooting episodes in Red Square. In this connection, he said, he would like to thank the Soviet Videofilm Corporation for its help. He added that the hospitality afforded was second to none, and that here in Moscow he had even put on two and a half kilos.

Asked what comes first for him - the cinema or athletics, Arnold said he takes both seriously and considers himself lucky to be doing both at the same time. He noted that each episode and stunt was the transference to the screen of what he had achieved in the gym.

When we wondered whether his new picture would not reinforce the unfortunate stereotype of the "enemy image," Arnold said that in his view motion pictures were made first and foremost to give pleasure, and not to criticize. In his movie career he has taken little interest in the political aspect and as for "Red Heat," what comes first is the relationship between a Soviet militiaman and an American policeman who join hands to battle the common evil of narcotics and become fast friends. He emphasized that all his parts in the movies have been of heroes and that in that respect Ivan Danko was no exception.

Our last question was whether he liked Moscow and had been able to do all he had set out to do. He said that when he learned of the anti-alcohol campaign for a healthy way of life in the Soviet Union, he had decided to present a cassette documentary about his body-building secrets. He said he had been told the cassette would soon be available at Soviet video clubs.

U.S. film director and script writer Walter Hill said he was very pleased with the cooperation with the Soviet partners, with whom they had a fine mutual understanding. He noted that the most important feature of the new picture would be the presentation of Soviet people as "goodies," and he thought it would be a box office success in the West. Although it was sheer entertainment, they hoped it would contribute to destroying the established "enemy stereotype" and achieving better understanding between our two peoples.

The recently organized Videofilm Corporation has initiated an extensive programme of cooperation with abroad. To compensate for the help given on "Red Heat," Videofilm will enjoy the right to run the picture at Soviet video clubs.

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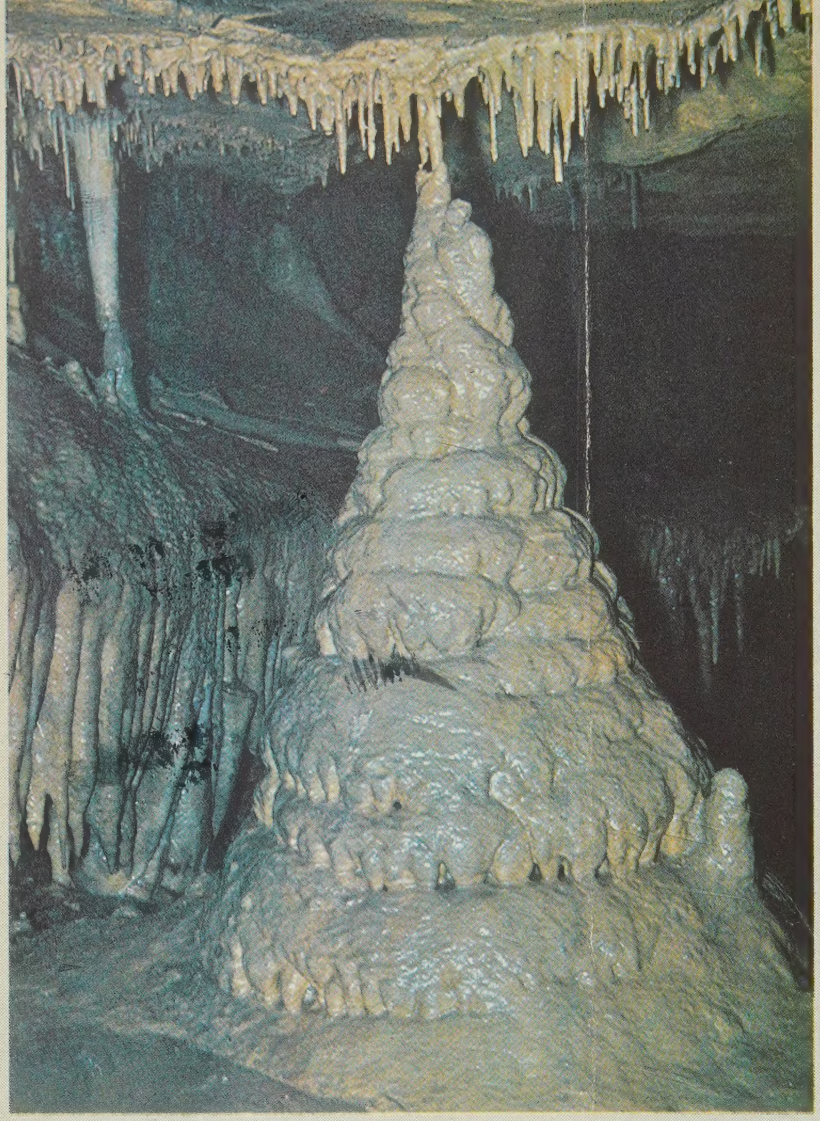
Soviet airlines



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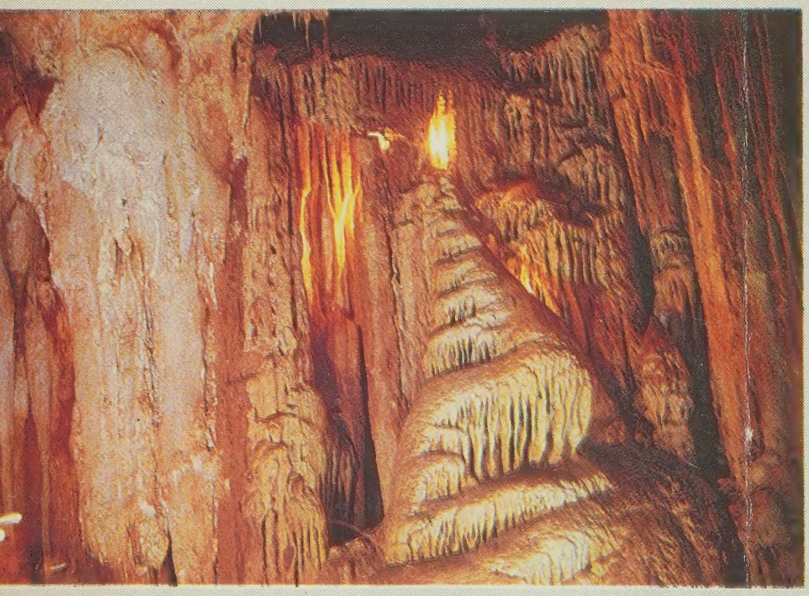

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